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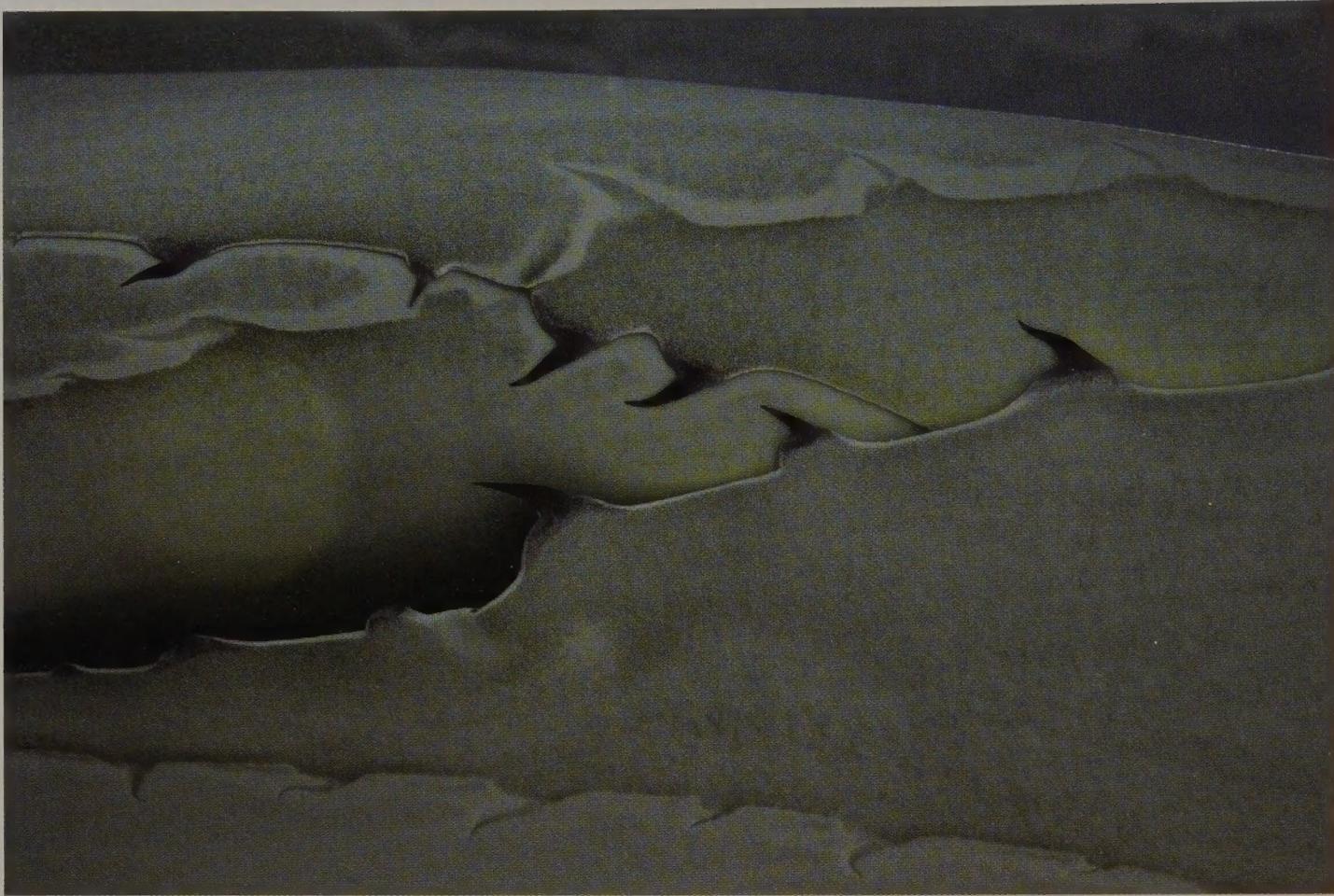
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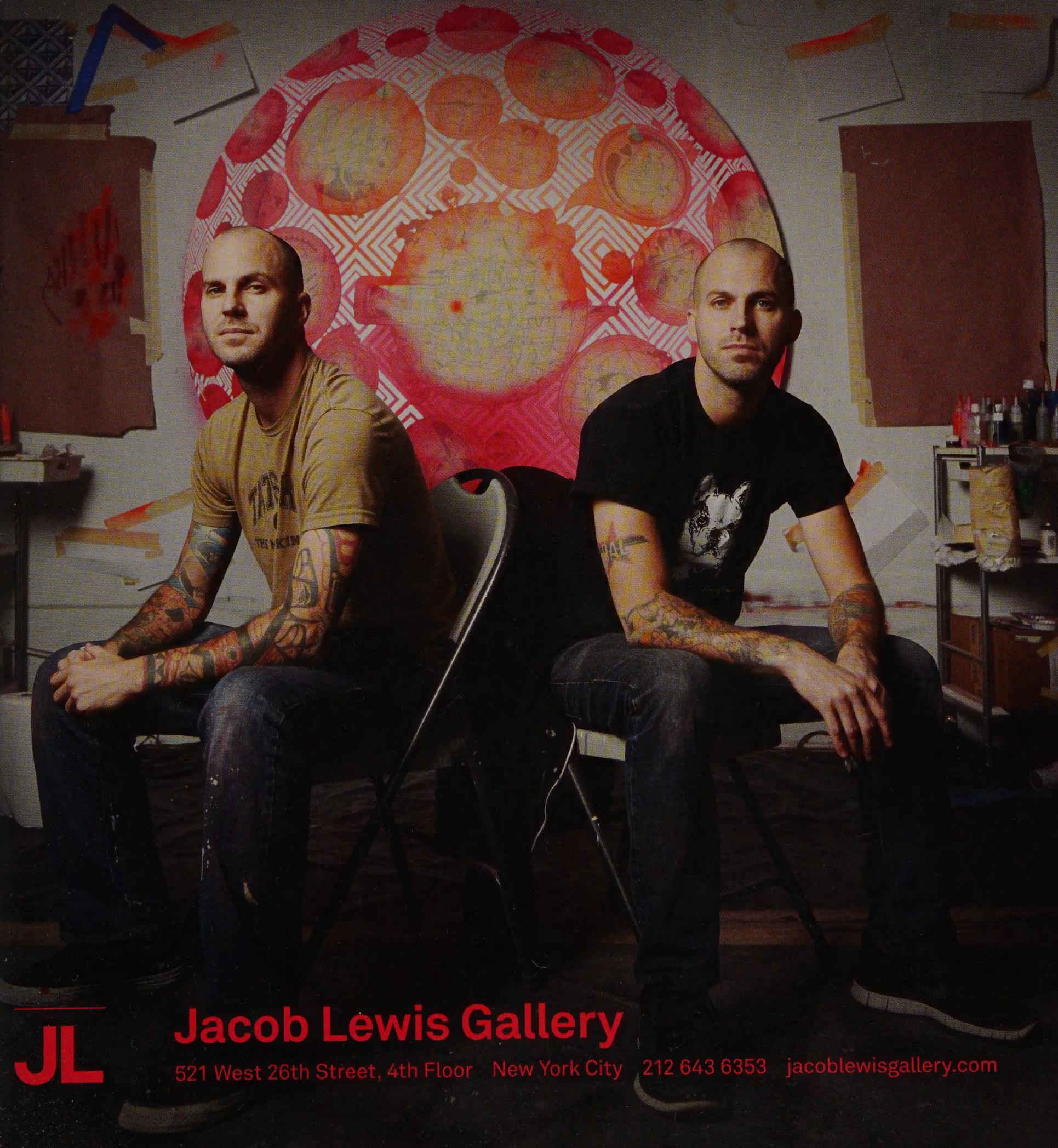
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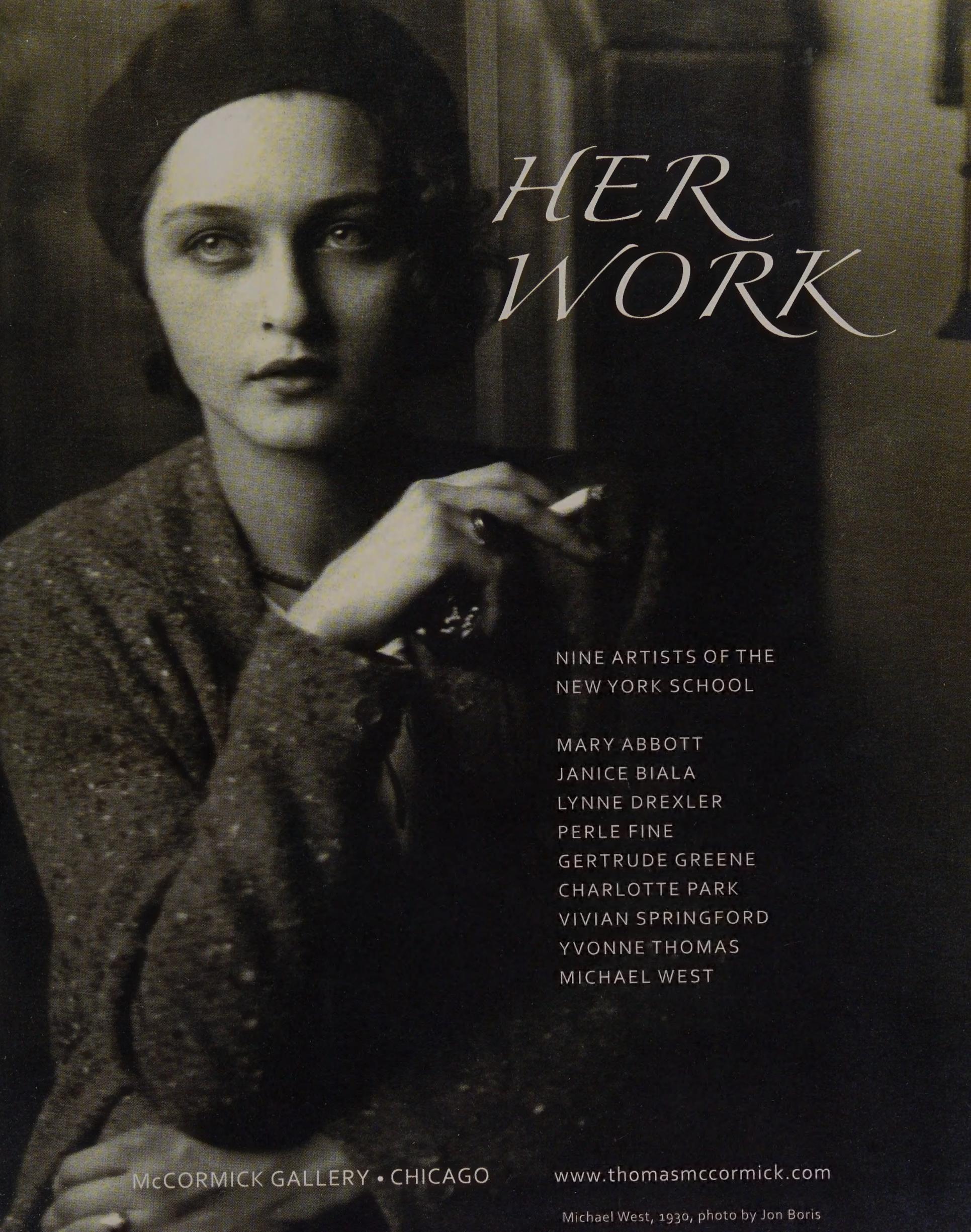


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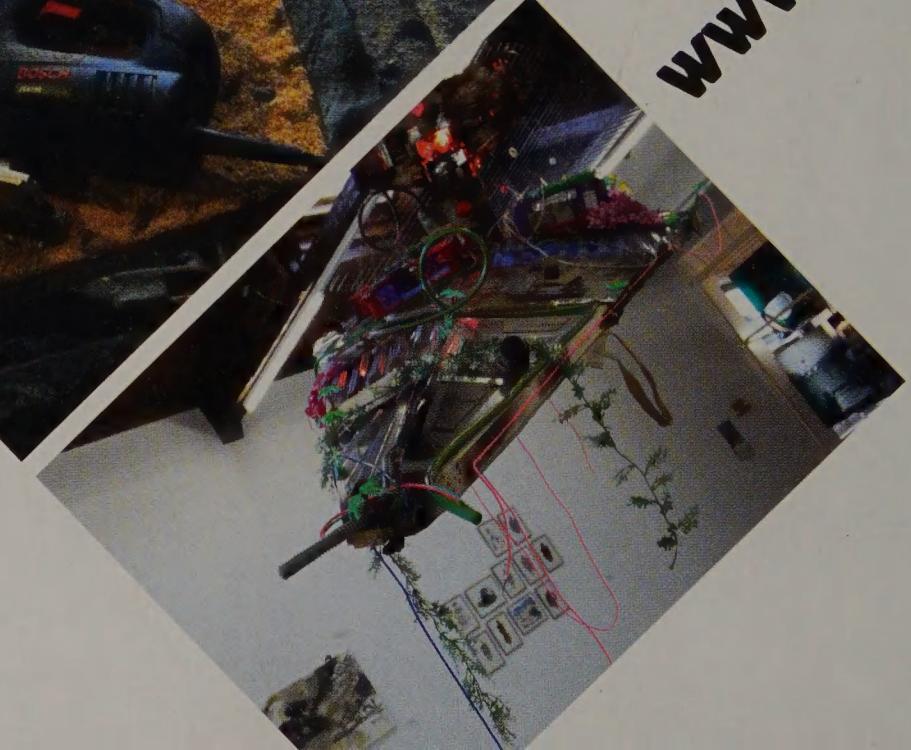
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Telephone: +48 513 009 042 E-mail: biuro@artnews.com

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John Marin (1870–1953) *Weehawken Sequence (No. 4)*, ca. 1916, oil on canvas laid down on board, 9 9/16 x 12 7/16 inches, lower right: *Marin / 04*; on verso: *Painted between / 1903–1904*

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At what point, we wonder, does a decade become fodder for nostalgia buffs—and why? Take the 1990s, for instance. In this issue of *ARTnews*, Linda Yablonsky looks back on that period, when the art world seemed to be a more modest and circumscribed place, and indulges in a renewed fascination with those times, as attested to by a handful of recent exhibitions.

That decade was a fruitful period for David Hammons, an artist who, even as today's market for his work has been exploding, continues to keep a deliberately low profile. Andrew Russeth's feature revels in Hammons's ambiguities and wonders about his latest improbable venture—far off the commercial track—in Yonkers, New York.

Of course, any exhibition that purports to take the temperature of the times, present or past, is, by its very nature, flawed; such stories depend on who is doing the telling. In that spirit, *ARTnews* senior editor M.H. Miller talks to the curators of the New Museum's 2015 Triennial, a showcase for emerging talent. This year's edition is hotly anticipated, since one of those curators is Ryan Trecartin, an artist who, with his films steeped in the frenzy of digital life, is considered a defining voice of his generation. How successful is he likely to be in spotting the talents of the upcoming one?

And what, in the current climate, becomes of those talents once they're spotted? These days it is all too easy to use market approval as a gauge of success. Young artists today might take pages from the playbooks of two from a previous generation. In this issue, Gary Indiana eulogizes Kathleen White, who refused to play the game, and Barbara Pollack profiles Charles Atlas, who has had a thriving parallel career outside the art world and jokes that he is "too old to sell out."



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TRUE CONFESSIONS OF A JUSTIFIED ART DEALER

PART THREE: DOWNHILL ALL THE WAY

BY JOEL MESLER

18



Giovanni Intra, co-owner of China Art Objects, making deals.

The first real crossover art celebrity to come out of Los Angeles's Chinatown was Eric Wesley, who showed at China Art Objects. The gallery's owner, Giovanni Intra, was selling Wesley's bronze casts of onion rings in neighborhood bars (\$100 a ring, though the price quickly escalated to \$200) and had placed Wesley in a show at Metro Pictures in New York in December 2002. Metro Pictures was one of the first galleries to open in Chelsea, now the city's main art district, but then a barren wasteland of garages, taxi outposts, and S&M clubs.

Landing an artist in a New York gallery was what every dealer in Chinatown—including myself—was hoping for. This was a sign that your gallery had made it—that you were a serious business. In the days leading up to leaving for New York, all Giovanni could talk about was how he was going to buy a pair of Margiela shoes when he got to the city. He grew up poor and spent much of his adulthood broke, and this was the first time in his life that he had spending money.

The Metro opening devolved into chaos. Wesley got

drunk and was locked out of his own party. As the gallery was closing down for the night, he started yelling on the street about wanting to be let back in. He kicked the front door hard enough to crack the glass. Metro Pictures promised to never work with him again and Giovanni never got his \$600 pair of shoes.

In fact, he never even made it back to Los Angeles. After the debacle at the opening, Giovanni met up with two friends from New Zealand who were living on the Lower East Side. They were regular heroin users, and Giovanni tried to keep up with them, but he wasn't a junkie and he overdosed in their apartment. The friends were too scared to call the cops, so Giovanni's body remained there overnight.

The news of his death traveled quickly to Los Angeles. My friend Mark von Schlegell, a writer who had met Giovanni at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, called me at six o'clock the next morning. I was living like a derelict in the basement of my gallery, illegally. Giovanni's business partner, Steve Hanson, was living above my gallery in more pleasant circumstances with the artist Frances Stark, who was pregnant with Hanson's child. Fifteen years later, von Schlegell would tell me of this time, "Something bad was bound to happen. Things were going too well."

I was born in Los Angeles up the hill from the Whisky a Go Go in 1974. My father's father invented the wire clothes hanger. My father was a cardiologist at Cedars-Sinai, and he graduated from Chicago Medical School with a cocaine addiction that lasts to this day, even now that his nose is a cauterized ball of flesh. My mother was the daughter of Polish immigrants who settled in Detroit. She married my father and became the president of the PTA. My father used his credentials to prescribe himself pharmaceutical cocaine and I saw him only at the occasional birthday party.

My parents filed for divorce in 1986, and it was enough of a disaster to change California law. Thanks to Mesler vs. Mesler, there is now transparency between probate, bankruptcy, and divorce courts in California. Needless to say, things got messy. One night, after my mother moved out, she drove my younger brother and me to my father's house when he wasn't home to steal everything she had deemed rightfully belonged to her. She waited with the car running while my brother and I broke in. I was nine years old.

"Everything looks different," my brother said. "I want to see what my room looks like."

"We don't have time for that," I said. "Just steal that painting, OK?"

Whatever low my mother was driven to by their split was no match for my father. Years after the divorce was finalized, to support his cocaine addiction, Dad was rapidly draining the \$3 million trust left for my brother and me by my grandfather. Eventually, my brother had enough of this and threatened to expose my father and have his medical license taken away. A few days after this threat, my brother was in his car outside my mother's house, which he visited on the same day at the same time every week. He was on the phone with his first wife when a bullet cracked his windshield, narrowly missing him. My father had hired a one-armed Vietnam veteran named JT to scare him. Despite the sniper's physical handicap, to this day I believe that if my father wanted to kill my brother, that bullet would have hit its target.

After Giovanni's death, it felt as if I had traded the depravity of my upbringing for more of the same; only the style was different. I sold drugs out of my gallery, I threw parties, sometimes I sold a little art. But at a memorial for Giovanni at the Geffen Contemporary in February, 2003, I put on my best clothes like everyone else from Chinatown to pay my respects. (I had to borrow a tie from Steve Hanson.) The entire L.A. art world was there. Herb and Lenore Schorr, the first devoted collectors of Jean-Michel Basquiat, were visibly distraught. I realized the disconnect between Giovanni and myself. He was building something; I was just joking around.

A more private memorial was held at China Art Objects later. I had too many Tsingtaos and started ranting about how I wanted the people who I believed killed Giovanni to be held accountable, but nobody seemed to care. All those artists and dealers were more concerned about what his demise would do for business. Nobody would discuss the circumstances surrounding his death. Of course, I knew even then that many of them considered me to be part of the problem, another hanger-on. Maybe they were right.

The truth is, I had been unsure of my life in the art world long before Giovanni died, and was planning to shut down my gallery anyway. Before he left for New York, I had organized one last show, and Giovanni gave me a painting he made of white text on black paper that said: "Holly Weird." The exhibition was on view when he died, and I kept the painting for myself. It hangs in the entrance to my apartment today. When the show was over, I closed the business and sold my building. ■

Joel Mesler owns New York's UNTITLED gallery. This is part three of a recurring column.

HOW TO KILL YOUR IDOLS

Kim Gordon names names in dishy memoir

BY M.H. MILLER

“Rock music is all about repression,” Kim Gordon wrote in the catalogue for the artist Mike Kelley’s 1993 retrospective at the Whitney Museum. Thankfully, though, everything repressed manages to return, and Gordon holds nothing back in her new memoir, *Girl in a Band* (HarperCollins, 2014). The book comes on the heels of the break-up of her band, Sonic Youth, and the end of her marriage to that group’s singer and guitarist, Thurston Moore. She begins at the end, Sonic Youth’s final show at the SWU Music & Arts Festival in São Paulo:

“Thurston double-slapped our bass guitarist Mark Ibold on the shoulder and loped across the stage, followed by Lee Ranaldo, our guitarist, and then Steve Shelley, our drummer. I found that gesture so phony, so childish, such a fantasy...[He’s] never been the shoulder-slapping type.”

And this is only the man’s first appearance. Moore appears as the villain over the course of this memoir, with dark foreshadowing of his decline even when times were good. This is not even to mention the woman he carried on an illicit affair with, who is, in turns, according to Gordon, a “nutcase,” “a groupie,” and “a current that dragged you underwater and you were miles from home before you even realized it.”

My takeaway is you do not want to make enemies with Kim Gordon. She emerges almost ridiculously triumphant with this book. Reading it, I couldn’t help but retroactively cringe at Moore’s comments in an interview with *New York* magazine last year in which he complained about “these feminist intellectuals who are attacking” his “beautiful feminist intellectual” girlfriend. Gordon’s last laugh: “I did feel some compassion for Thurston, and I still do. I was sorry for the way he had lost his marriage, his band, his daughter, his family, our life together—and

himself. But that is a lot different from forgiveness.”

These passages make me think of other great memoirs cataloguing spousal indiscretion—in particular Norris Church Mailer’s *A Ticket to the Circus*, about Norman Mailer’s “grand experiment in monogamy” with the author, his sixth and last wife, which of course was a failure (“I’m not going to talk about the numerous girlfriends, but you know who you are, and there are many more of you than you think,” she writes). Gordon’s relentlessness in the face of Moore’s betrayal is a welcome addition to the canon of tell-alls, but far better is her garrulous romp through the New York art world of the 1980s, which Gordon flitted around in various capacities—as an artist, as an assistant, and as a member of an alternative-rock band that functioned more as a roving sound installation, at home in both the regular rotation of MTV and the writings of Dan Graham. *Girl in a Band* might be the best record we currently have of the golden age of downtown Manhattan, casually filled with myth-like anecdotes and scorched earth.

Graham lived above Gordon on Eldridge Street, and he offered her an introduction into the art world, though she’d had a taste for it before this neighborly intervention. Her first band, Below the Belt, played its second gig at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, entering the stage to their drummer asking “the spics and cunts to come out and play.” They were drunk and quickly thrown from the stage, but Mike Kelley was in the audience, and thought it might be a good idea to start a band of his own. Gordon’s first job after high school was as an assistant for one Larry Gagosian, then a lowly poster-seller in Westwood, not terribly far from where Gordon grew up in Los Angeles. “He was mean, yelling at us all the time for messing up, being too slow, just plain *being*,” she writes. “He was erratic, and the last person on the planet I would have ever thought would later become the world’s most powerful art dealer.”

This character assessment is nearly kind compared to those Gordon offers of other figures from the Grunge era and beyond. Billy Corgan is “such a crybaby.” Courtney Love is “manipulative,” “egomaniacal,” and “might be mentally ill.” Of Lana Del Rey, Gordon’s disciple in moody, aggressive half-singing, Gordon merely says, “Why doesn’t she just off herself?” After she moved to New York, Gordon became Gagosian’s receptionist at his gallery in SoHo. He would occasionally visit Gordon at her loft, groping at her and receiving a kick in the shins for his efforts. Though he claims to this day that the two dated, Gordon vehemently denies it. “I just couldn’t take Larry seriously, ever,” she says.

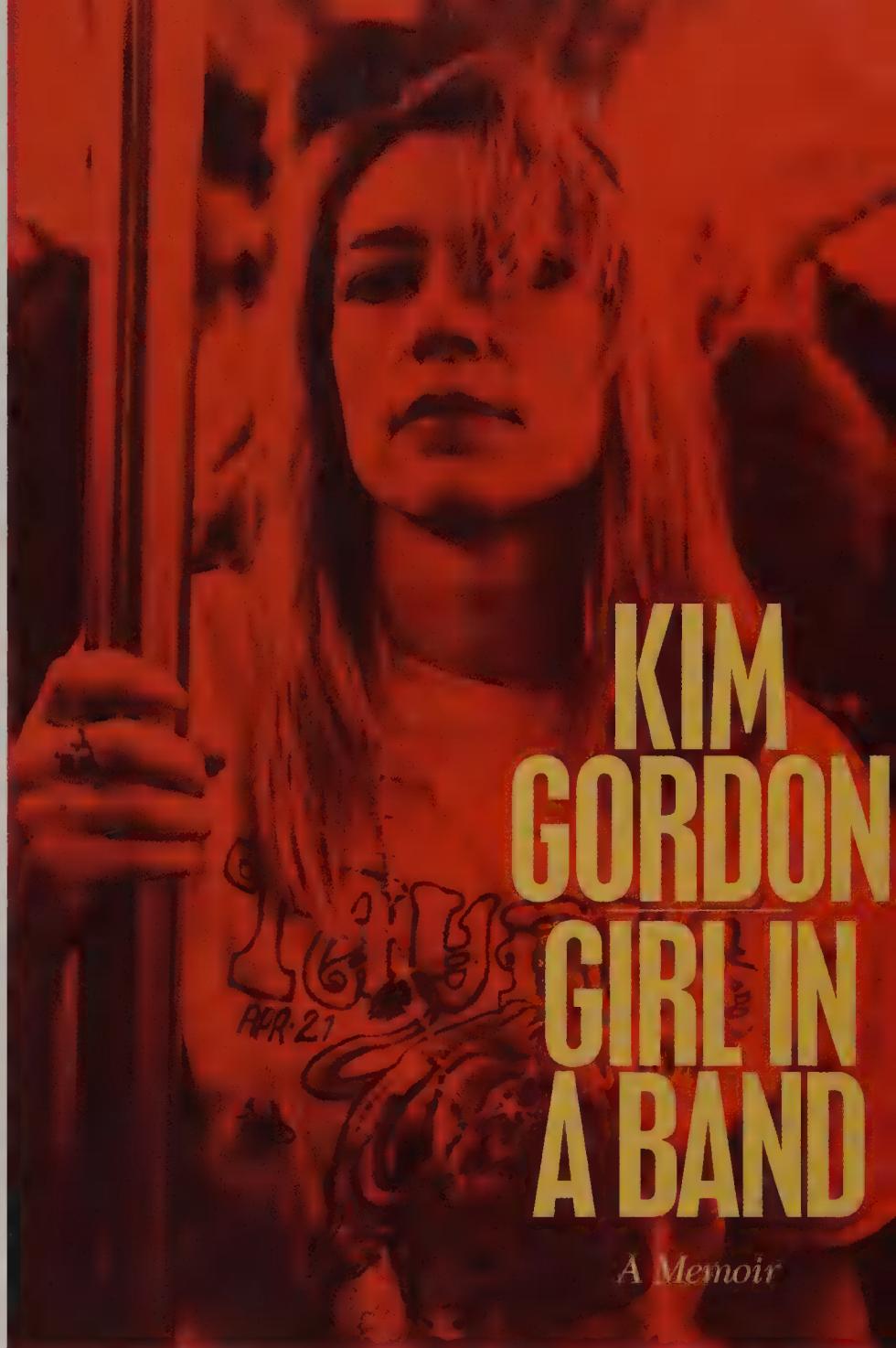
One day, while Gordon was working the front desk at

Gagosian, a young artist named Richard Prince walked into the gallery carrying a portfolio of “rephotographed watch ads,” which, as if to appear in the know, he had packaged in the “signature awful frames” of Gagosian Gallery. Gagosian rejected him for being “too conceptual.” (Of course, history has a way of revising itself, and Prince is now one of Gagosian’s superstar artists; the gallery recently sold blown-up screen grabs of Prince’s Instagram out of its New York bookshop.) Gordon and Prince became fast friends and would frequent Mickey’s on University Place, where a young Julian Schnabel worked as a line cook, cavorting with an unknown Jeff Koons, who had recently done an exhibition of a series of standing vacuum cleaners. “Pretty much no one liked Jeff,” Gordon writes.

Gordon met Moore at 27, and she describes his deejay set at the Squat Theatre, early on in their relationship, where he shared a bill with Nico and a band fronted by David Johansen, onetime leader of the New York Dolls. This was, Gordon writes, “a depressing evening. Nico cried.” After Gordon and Moore put together Sonic Youth, their debut album in 1982 was released to little fanfare. As if verifying their art-world cred, the band’s first serious public mention came months later in Greil Marcus’s column in *Artforum*. He wrote about their cover of the Stooges’ “I Wanna Be Your Dog,” sung by Gordon with as much violence and fury as a serial killer. “This woman knows stuff that I don’t know,” Marcus wrote. Marcus was an early supporter and thus a friend of the band. The same couldn’t be said for Marcus’s contemporary, Robert Christgau, music critic for the *Village Voice*, who attended a Sonic Youth concert only to have someone in the audience try to set him on fire. “Playfully, though,” Gordon explains.

Gordon would go on to eat fried chicken with Neil Young on his tour bus, guest star on *The Simpsons*, headline Lollapalooza, and bellow the immortal lines of “The Sprawl,” from *Daydream Nation* (1988): “To the extent that I wear skirts and cheap nylon slips I’ve gone native”—one of the great openings of any song ever. Which makes the unceremonious end to Sonic Youth all the more disappointing. Their last show, at the festival in Brazil, was drowning in corporate sponsorship and was headlined by, among others, the Black Eyed Peas. The set was short and it rained the whole time. Everything ends, though. New York is now, in Gordon’s words, “one echo-effect mall-friendly chain store after another,” all the things she loved “worn down and chased out.” ■

M.H. Miller is senior editor at ARTnews.





“FOR THE MOST PART IT'S INTROSPECTION”:
A TALK WITH THEODORA ALLEN

BY BILL POWERS

BILL POWERS: THE LAST TIME WE MET YOU WERE ON YOUR WAY TO A JONI MITCHELL CONCERT. SHE WAS ALSO SILHOUETTED IN A PAINTING AT YOUR M.F.A. SHOW AT UCLA LAST MAY.

Theodora Allen: It actually wasn't a concert that night—just an event honoring her. I've loved her music for a long time. I was raised on it. But, yeah, the silhouetted figure from my thesis show—it's from concert footage from the early '70s. Her face is in profile, with head tilted, mouth slightly open, eyes cast downward. There's a suggestion of emotion, but nothing about the look on her face is decisively Joni. There are a few profiles like this that I keep returning to. They're unrelated images, but they share the same downcast eyes. It's the despondency of the gaze that sets the tone for the rest of the work. These profiles, like the plants and other objects that inhabit my paintings, are both representations and analogues. There are references to ideas about transcendence, but for the most part it's introspection, and in that regard the paintings take a decisively Humanist position.

BP: I LOVE THE FADE-IN/FADE-OUT QUALITY OF YOUR SURFACES. HOW DO YOU ACHIEVE THAT LOOK AND WHAT DO YOU FIND IMPORTANT ABOUT IT?

TA: I build the paintings up slowly by applying thin layers of oil paint and then, using a soft cloth, I systematically remove what I've laid down. With each pass of the cloth, the weave of the linen becomes more pronounced, and traces of color are left behind. It's a process that retains the traces of every decision—the material has a memory. It's why the images in the paintings appear to be both forming and disappearing.

BP: YOU ALSO HAD SOME STAINED-GLASS WINDOW SCULPTURES IN YOUR M.F.A. SHOW, BUT ALL THE GLASS WAS CLEAR.

TA: That's right. I had these sealed glass boxes made using traditional stained-glass technique. The soldered seams that joined the glass together related back to the geometric elements that held together the painted compositions. The glass felt like the shell to the painting.

BP: ANOTHER HERO OF YOURS IS WILLIAM BLAKE. TELL US ABOUT HIM FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE.

TA: I'm drawn to the philosophical and mystical underpinnings in his work. Similar concerns are what interest me in the works of Odilon Redon and Hilma af Klint. And centuries later it's coursing through the music of Judee Sill, and Gene Clark's 'No Other.' Pathos as well.

BP: YOUR PAINTINGS WERE AN INSPIRATION FOR HEDI SLIMANE'S SECOND WOMEN'S COLLECTION AT SAINT LAURENT. SOMETIMES FASHION AND ART DON'T PLAY WELL TOGETHER.

TA: You know, I wasn't nervous about that. Hedi and his design assistant Beth Houfek responded to the work in a way that felt genuine. It wasn't in an "I like it because it's beautiful" kind of way. I felt that they really got it. I admire Slimane's headstrong approach with Saint Laurent. It's uncompromising. It all felt right. In the year since they used my artwork for the invitation, they've collaborated with John Baldessari, Raymond Pettibon, and the estates of Robert Heinecken, Guy de Cointet, and Bruce Conner. I'm in great company.

BP: I LOVED A RECENT HOURGLASS PAINTING OF YOURS I SAW AT FRIEZE LONDON. CAN YOU TELL US HOW THAT PIECE CAME ABOUT?

TA: I've been thinking a lot about emblems of time. Markers. In the past I've used the metronome and the moth as symbols of this. Where the metronome's count is infinite, and the moth's existence is brief, the hourglass is reversible—it's laced with hope.

BP: WHAT'S YOUR FASCINATION WITH MOTHS?

TA: Their internal navigation system directs them to fly toward the light, which often ends in flames.

BP: AN ICARUS OF THE NATURAL WORLD.

TA: Exactly. I think the moth holds some of the same ideological implications as the butterfly, like social metamorphosis and idealism, but specifically it relates to ideas about looking inward and the risk of being burned.

BP: YOU ALSO HAVE SOME GUITAR PAINTINGS BUT THE INSTRUMENTS ARE ALL MISSING STRINGS. ARE THEY SOMEHOW REFERRING TO CLASSIC IMAGES OF WOMEN PLAYING LUTES?

TA: The guitar is this perfect form. It's symmetrical, like the hourglass, and like the heart symbol that appears in other paintings of mine. It's feminine. But it's also an instrument for personal expression, and for sorting through our experience of the natural world—for making sense of our place in it. But the guitars in these paintings lack the strings and the tuning pegs—the sound. I'm not thinking of them as broken, or forsaken. They were built that way: unplayable.

Theodora Allen's inaugural show with Blum & Poe opens in L.A. on March 7.



"VAN GOGH TO ROTHKO: MASTERWORKS FROM THE ALBRIGHT-KNOX ART GALLERY"

CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, BENTONVILLE, ARKANSAS

FEBRUARY 21 - JUNE 1

Crystal Bridges mounts an ambitious show that "traces the story of the avant-garde," from early modernism through Abstract Expressionism and Pop art. There are 76 works by more than 40 artists, like Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Paul Gauguin, Joan Miró, and Andy Warhol, all on loan from the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo. This is, according to Crystal Bridges, "the first time many of the works have toured in decades."

Jackson Pollock, *Convergence*, 1952, oil on canvas.



"DORIS SALCEDO"

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART CHICAGO

FEBRUARY 21 - MAY 24

Bogotá-based sculptor Doris Salcedo gets her first museum retrospective in Chicago, featuring work from her three-decade career, which often includes materials like concrete doors, tables, chairs, and other furniture. The show is also the U.S. debut of her recent piece *Plegaria Muda* (2008-10), "an expansive installation of tables, inverted one atop another, with individual blades of grass growing through holes in their surfaces," according to the museum.

Installation view of Doris Salcedo's *Plegaria Muda*, 2008-10.



"WHEN THE STARS BEGIN TO FALL: IMAGINATION AND THE AMERICAN SOUTH"

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART, BOSTON

FEBRUARY 4 - MAY 10

This exhibition, which was organized by MoMA curator Thomas Lax when he was at the Studio Museum in Harlem, brings together "self-taught, spiritually inspired, and incarcerated artists," showing them alongside artists like David Hammons, Theaster Gates, and Kara Walker. It follows 35 artists from different generations and backgrounds—linked by a fascination with the American South—attempting to reveal the relationship between "contemporary art, black life, and 'outsider' art," the latter of which the museum describes as a "historically fraught category."

Ralph Lemon's archival pigment print *Untitled*, 2013-14.

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To view or download an electronic catalogue of works in the exhibit go to helandershowcatalogs.com



"KEHINDE WILEY: A NEW REPUBLIC"

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, NEW YORK

FEBRUARY 20 - MAY 24

This show is a survey of Kehinde Wiley's career, which has mined the style of Old Master painting to portray young African American men and women in contemporary attire, posed to look like various heroic figures from throughout art history. Wiley finds his subjects through "street casting," pulling strangers off the street into his studio to sit for portraits. The critic Holland Cotter has said that Wiley "creates history as much as he tells it."

Kehinde Wiley, *Femme piquée par un serpent*, 2008, oil on canvas.



"EMBRACING MODERNISM: TEN YEARS OF DRAWINGS ACQUISITIONS"

MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM, NEW YORK

FEBRUARY 13 - MAY 24

The Morgan celebrates its tenth anniversary of collecting modern and contemporary drawings with a show of more than 90 acquisitions, which date from 1900 to 2013. Artists with work in the show include a range of, in the Morgan's words, "some of the greatest artists of our time," such as Kippenberger, Matisse, Pollock, Twombly, Warhol, and many others. The show is organized by Isabelle Dervaux, curator of modern and contemporary drawings at the museum since 2005.

Roy Lichtenstein's study for *No Thank You!*, 1964, graphite and colored pencil.



"THE 2015 TRIENNIAL"

NEW MUSEUM, NEW YORK

FEBRUARY 25 - MAY 24

The 2015 Triennial is called "Surround Audience" and explores the broad topic of "how artists are currently depicting subjectivity." Curated by the New Museum's Lauren Cornell and artist Ryan Trecartin, and based on a "predictive, rather than retrospective, model," the exhibition features 51 artists from around the world, many of whom will be participating in a U.S. museum exhibition for the first time. The show was inspired in part by Trecartin's own artistic practice.

Frank Benson. *Juliana*, 2015, a digital rendering of painted Accura® Xtreme Plastic rapid prototype.

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MOONSTRUCK

After eleven years, the painter Scott Reeder has finally finished his first feature film, *Moon Dust* (2014), and recently screened it in New York City. “David Lynch’s first film, *Eraserhead*, took about seven or eight years, so I kept thinking, ‘I’m right on track!’” Reeder said over beers in Manhattan’s East Village. “It was kind of like building a cathedral out of matchsticks—I worked on it when I had the chance,” in between shows of his art, “when I had extra time or money.”

The film is set on the moon, “in a resort that has seen better days, like Coney Island,” Reeder said. It’s a “retro, mid-century, ’50s kind of idea of the future.” Which is to say that it’s filled with boxy, rather flimsy-looking architecture and furniture painted in shades that are reminiscent of the artist’s paintings, whole sections of the building covered with hazy pink, lilac, or bright yellow.

The colors correspond to different classes of workers, just as employees are classified at Google and Disney World. “For some reason the lowest-class color is this salmon color—they’re doing all the manual labor,” said Reeder, who is 44, based in Detroit, and teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Is there a plot? Yes and no. “It’s a little bit more narrative than most art films, but then it’s pretty artsy for—” Reeder cut himself off. “It’s not a Hollywood movie.”

Definitely not. The film meanders through various sections of the vacation spot. There’s a spaced-out rock concert, an uproarious guest appearance from musician Ian Svenonius (of the hardcore band Nation of Ulysses) as the resort announcer, and Reeder himself plays the base manager with a penchant for exotic drugs. Eventually, all hell breaks loose.

The same could almost be said of the film’s production, which kept going and going, with Reeder shooting some 80 hours of footage in total. (Using amateurs—friends and acquaintances—required quite a few takes.) Eventually artist Laura Owens, bookseller Wendy Yao, and

the art dealer Gavin Brown, who all knew about the film, got together and offered Reeder use of the sprawling 356 Mission Street space that they run together in Los Angeles. “They were all just like, ‘Just fucking finish it! We’ve got all this space,’” he said.

He built out large sets for the first time. The pressure was on. “It escalated into this bigger thing,” he said. “It got a lot more ambitious. Once I had the space, I just went nuts. Now I can see how people do stuff in Hollywood where people are like, ‘We built this thing! Why did we do that again? Who was in charge of this?’ Shit like, ‘Do we have a scene for this?’ There’s just this madness.”

The movie also began spilling over into his painting practice. “I started making—I call them, sort of unofficially, ‘Landlord Paintings,’ because they’re made with a roller. It came out of painting and repainting the sets. There’d be these moments where we’d have an intern helping me paint, and they didn’t know how to paint a wall and it would be like three different colors, and it would look like a Clyfford Still”—a look he channels in those new works.

For his next project he’s returning to painting, planning a two-person show with Andrew Kuo, which opens this month at Marlborough Chelsea’s Broome Street space. Details were still sketchy when I spoke with Reeder, but it will include a performance program modeled on Club Nutz, the comedy club Reeder once helped run in Milwaukee.

He’s also mulling a *Moon Dust* companion piece, a cut of the film using some of that old footage that could screen concurrently, showing what is happening elsewhere on the resort. “Not that I want to spend another eleven years fucking around with *B-Side of the Moon*,” he said, “but I think because it’s all fresh in my mind, and all the material I’ve gone through recently, I think I could actually do it pretty quickly.”

ANDREW RUSSETH

Still from Scott Reeder’s *Moon Dust*, 2014.





WHO DOESN'T LIKE A GOOD ART JOKE?

30

Over the past few years there has been a minor humor renaissance within the art world. Artists from a variety of backgrounds have been incorporating strategies cribbed from stand-up, operating in a cultural grey area that merges traditions and often attempts to create new categories altogether.

Los Angeles artist Casey Jane Ellison considers comedy to be the basis of her practice, which also includes animation and video. Ellison is the host of an all-female panel TV series on Ovation called "Touching the Art," where she explores a range of art-world topics with a deadpan demeanor that rests somewhere between disaffected '90s MTV cartoon icon Daria and cantankerous PBS mainstay John McLaughlin. This was not an accident. "The Andy Warhol talk show was one of the images on our mood board, but personally I was more influenced by 'The McLaughlin Group,'" said Ellison.

"Touching the Art" uses comedy as a tool to explore larger problems within the art world, and Ellison isn't the only artist using the language of comedy to disrupt art-world conventions. Artist Sean Joseph Patrick Carney, who describes his approach as "site-specific comedy," teaches a class at the artist-run Bruce High Quality Foundation University called "Humor and the Abject" that hosts "comic object critiques" and performance nights that he describes as "more Andy Kaufman than Jerry Seinfeld."

With his ontological approach to stand-up, Kaufman is a natural touchstone for many artists exploring this theme, and in 2013, New York's Maccarone gallery organized a

Kaufman retrospective. (It was titled "On Creating Reality.") The show included a performance by Kaufman's alter ego, the humorless and offensive Tony Clifton, often played by Kaufman's collaborator Bob Zmuda, whose prolific stand-up performances after Kaufman's death from lung cancer at the age of 35 helped fuel rumors that his demise was just another joke. (When asked if Zmuda was available for comment, Maccarone said he would contact us "if he's interested." He wasn't.)

For his apparently posthumous grandstanding, Kaufman may have been the performance artist to end all performance artists, but it's important to remember that he operated within the world of entertainment, and not the visual arts. This is a crucial distinction. When asked about the difference between contemporary-art audiences and comedy audiences in a May 2014 interview with *Frieze* magazine, performance artist and comedian Michael Smith remarked, "Art audiences will watch paint dry."

Ben O'Brien—part of Baltimore's Wham City Comedy collective, who as a group come primarily from a fine-arts background—prefers not to delineate between the two worlds. He attends up to five open-mic nights a week, and believes that the rigor of this process has strengthened his practice as an artist.

Ellison, for her part, said she doesn't really tailor her material to the rooms she is performing in. Why? "Comedy clubs can be very avant-garde," she said.

JOHN CHIAVERINA

Tony Clifton, *Live from the Sunset Strip*, 2010.



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ALWAYS CRASHING IN THE SAME CAR

This February, the Israeli architect, artist, and designer Ron Arad will join New York's Paul Kasmin Gallery with a debut exhibition that will showcase his riffs on the Fiat 500.

After ten years at Friedman Benda, Arad came to Kasmin looking for a new gallery following Barry Friedman's retirement last year. He was drawn to Kasmin, he said, in part because the dealer wouldn't pigeonhole him.

"Frank Gehry had to stop making furniture to be taken seriously as an architect," Arad said in an interview. "I don't want not to do furniture so that people better understand my art."

People will make of it what they will. By way of example, Arad described a curved metal ping-pong table he designed and showed at the Royal Academy in London. "It slows down the game," he said. "Once you play on my table you don't want to play on anything else." Francesco Clemente's apparently addicted to it and at the Royal Academy opening Sir Anthony Caro complimented Arad on the "marvelous sculpture."

"I just said, 'Thank you, Sir Anthony!'" Arad recalled.

The story of the Fiat series is tied to Arad's career and demonstrates how he works. Design Museum Holon in Israel, which Arad designed, wanted to give him a retrospective, an idea he nixed. Instead he wanted to distill "the artisan style of my working life."

Long interested in the Fiat, Arad decided to crush the cars, not in a John Chamberlain way, but so that he could hang them on the walls of Paul Kasmin Gallery

"like pressed flowers." This ambitious installation recalls Arad's 2009 retrospective at MoMA, in which objects from his 25-year career were placed in a gallery in sleek metal racks stretching from floor to ceiling.

The crushed cars had appeared in a 2013 exhibition at the Design Museum Holon, alongside Arad's furniture and design works. Crushing them proved difficult (and, for some undisclosed reason, illegal) and eventually Arad resorted to an industrial press. But the way the cars flattened made him think about their design, so he also rebuilt one using steel rods. He calls it *Roddy Giacosa* (2013), after Dante Giacosa, who designed the car.

Then Arad wanted to crush that one too, or was at least curious what it would look like in that form. He reached out to Framestore, the computer-graphics company that did the effects for the film *Gravity*. They created videos of *Roddy* falling from a great height and shattering, and helped Arad crush CGI Fiats. The resulting video looks so realistic that people who see it often ask Arad if he somehow used a near-invisible press made of glass to shoot the footage.

All these works will likely end up at Kasmin (though, naturally, Arad is still mulling over the installation). The crushed Fiats sell for six figures, not that that's a concern of his.

"You make something and it will find a home," Arad said.

DAN DURAY

Ron Arad, *Pressed Flower White*, 2013, steel, glass, leather, plastic, and vinyl, 118" x 185" x 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ ".

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The Islands of the Arts: SHORES OF SOPHISTICATION

Aquamarine seas, spectacular sunsets and skies saturated with colors from the palettes of painters: the renowned natural elements of Key West have long provided inspiration for the island's creative conversations. But the island city also intrigues with a contemporary edge and flair that flourishes well beyond its borders—often a delightful and sophisticated surprise for arts enthusiasts.

Since the 1930s, the Florida Keys have zeroed in on their heritage and natural resources to drive the economy and allure of the islands, helping make Key West the arts destination it is today, with more artists and galleries per capita than anywhere in the world. Key West native and past curator of museums in both Europe and South America Nance Frank takes the Works Progress Administration's lead with the current curating of her Gallery on Greene.

The gallery has great depth, representing a refined and eclectic grouping of over 37 local artists within 100 miles of Key West, many of whom have earned significant international acclaim, including seven Pulitzer Prizes. The work of late editorial cartoonist and three-time Pulitzer Prize-winning Jeff MacNelly is filled with irony and amusement: transgender roosters with sequined bosoms, dogs riding bicycles with people in baskets, and looming, colorful figures with their small Chihuahuas—spirited

elements of the city from which his work was drawn.

"We also have world-class light to work with, which draws many artists," says Frank, remarking how the vibrant and lush landscape inevitably plays into the work of the artists she represents.

Regionalist Peter Vey embraces the spirit of both the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists in his exuberant still lifes but with tropical inspiration. "He haunts the halls of museums and picks up techniques from all the greats," says Frank of the artist whose verve and drama in capturing light and color are enhanced by his artist's mixing knife—his only tool.

Tonalist Priscilla Coote brings to life the saturated hues of the island's idyllic environment in a way that integrates past with present. Her sunlit surroundings and love of deep shadows create a world on the page so ethereal you want to dive in.

William B. Thompson offers provocative and engrossing landscape paintings that meld innovation, abstraction, vibrant color and realistic images with distinction and confidence.

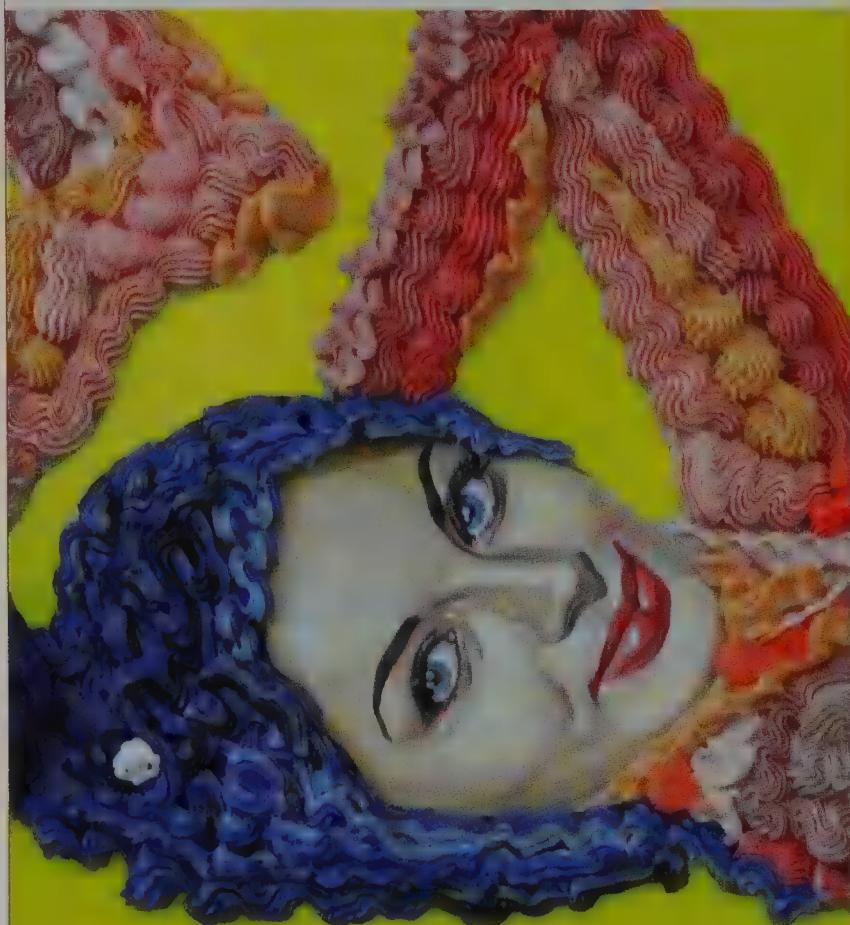
Carole Feuerman renders swimmers with water droplets that dot the figures' skin and glisten so realistically you want to touch them. One of the world's most celebrated and influential hyperrealist sculptors, Feuerman creates powerful impersonations in both monumental and life-sized work and is the only figurative artist



ABOVE: Carole A. Feuerman, *Monumental Dive*, 2012. Oil on Bronze with Polished Stainless Steel, 67" x 60" x 43".

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ABOVE: The Merger, *Tsunami*, 2014, 14" x 15" x 13".

to hyperrealistically paint bronze for use in outdoor public art and install them into water.

But what is contemporary without the history that helps shape and inform it? Frank's gallery is no stranger to heritage, with the notable Mario Sanchez featuring prominently in her space. The most important Cuban American folk artist of the 20th century, the Key West native's work preserves the "old Key West" with stories and scenes of everyday life found inside his colorful woodcarvings of Cuban, Afro-Cuban, Bahamian, Afro-Bahamian, Jewish, Chinese and Italian cigar rollers, street vendors, and fishermen.

"His work shows how we, as a culture, embrace diversity and one human race," she says. "He helps reveal the Cuban values and utopian spirit found here."

Frank herself has worked to build the cultural bridge to our closest neighbor for more than 20 years, offering her experience with the influential and sophisticated Cuba and Cuban culture to arts enthusiasts through legal art tours. It is this experience that gives her a deep connection with revered Cuban artists Mendive, Fabelo, Rocio, Sandra Ramos, Stainless, and The-Merger—the auction darlings of Cuba represented in her gallery.

Fabelo's mysterious and magical drawings, watercolors, oils and installation pieces offer commentary on the human condition with elements of Surrealism and Expressionism that leave one haunted but wanting more.

The-Merger is the artistic enterprise of sculpture between Cuban creators Alain Pino, Mario Miguel Gonzalez (Mayito), and Niels Moleiro, a trio greatly influenced by the present economic, social and political conditions in Cuba. Their objects hold hidden stories of cultural and historical meaning and often express a sense of playful cynicism.

Afro-Cuban artist Mendive incorporates drawing, painting, body painting, wood carving, and sculpture into his work. The harsh economic climate requires him to rely on creativity and resourcefulness—paint and wood



ABOVE: Adam Russell, *5 Watchovers*, 2014. Ceramic, Steel, Stone. 1 x 6'.

and other combined elements such as hair, sand, feathers and glass—all lending to a primitive quality.

No stranger to utilizing the landscape's offerings around her, Helen Harrison takes her inspiration from the island's indigenous resources: fallen palm fronds; native Floridian hard woods; seedlings and pods; the rich and vibrant colors of the flora. She transforms these resources into sensual, contemporary sculptures with a sensitive and poetic edge, rising up out of their rawness into a respected collector's level of interest.

Harrison's love of woodworking and assemblage comes from more than a decade of building and living on a wooden boat with husband and author/musician Ben Harrison, who recently documented some of their experiences in his latest novel, *Sailing Down the Mountain: A Costa Rican Adventure*. Harrison Gallery and her work studio behind it has become a literal door to open for people to see her work and has been open for almost 30 years.

Harrison curates new and select artists to share her gallery with, including avian artist Cindy Kulp, whose exquisite treatment of light creates paintings that are almost sculptural in their own right; Charles Pebworth, best known for his metal relief sculptures and incorporation of found natural materials into his mysterious, geometric and contemporary pieces; and Bradley Sabin, whose sculptural wall installations of natural elements beckon a sense of magical realism that engages and delights.

The contemporary pulse continues with arts and culture center The Studios of Key West, which recently relocated to a landmark Art Deco building in the heart of the island's bustling downtown area. The vibrant organization presents exhibitions, art talks, classes and performances while providing studio space and residencies to artists.

Visitors to the Studios' galleries enjoy an eclectic variety of rotating works by island and international artists as well as outdoor installations in the lush Sculpture and Nature Garden. They celebrated their inaugural

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season in the new building with an exhibition by Stainless, the three-man collective of Alejandro Pineiro Bello, Jose Gabriel Capaz, and Roberto Fabelo Hung. Amidst the explosion of interest in contemporary Cuban art in recent years, Stainless has managed to stand out with a savvy mix of seduction, spectacle and humor.

Local artist Adam Russell's own large-scale sculptures have become a defining fixture of Key West Pottery and will be featured in an exhibition at The Studios of Key West in April. Key West Pottery, too, has recently moved—to the upper Duval arts district. The ceramics specialty gallery with functional pottery and fine art appeals to the contemporary, chic, and colorful aesthetic of South Florida with artworks that range from tea bowls to large-scale public installations.

"His work has become less a teapot and more of a cultural placemarker," says Russell's wife and gallery manager Kelly Lever, who produces the gallery's functional work with Zen-like creativity and precision.

Both are educated painters, putting a contemporary spin on an ancient art form and adorning their pieces with imagery and color that share the current essence of the Florida Keys. "The material we use is so durable it stands the test of time," says Lever. "An archeologist will learn a lot about who we, as a culture, are."

The Mel Fisher Maritime Museum is already doing just that. The only accredited museum in the Florida Keys, it is also an active research center with an on-staff archeologist that aids in the development of its exhibits on slavery, artifact recovery and conservation and piracy.

The museum is well respected for its work with the slave ship *Henrietta Marie* and the Key West African Cemetery, both of which have shed in-

valuable insight into the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The museum archaeologist, conservator, and interns are currently focused on the shipwreck Santa Clara, which sank in 1564.

The Museum's most famous story may well be that of Mel himself. After a 16-year search, with the support of the Key West community of divers, his family, and investors who believed in him, he was able to not only discover the Spanish treasure galleon *Nuestra Senora de Atocha* but a time capsule of life in 1622. This year marks the 30th anniversary of his hopeful expression, "Today's the day," actually proving to be true.

Painter Noel Skiba searches for her own treasure in the light of the islands.

"As a historian, I document a moment. I paint spontaneously on site," she says. "Whenever or where the spirit moves me, I am ready."

Working in both her Big Pine Key studio gallery and on Mackinac Island, Skiba uses an impasto technique with acrylics and oil in her *plein air* paintings to convey the changing tones of tropical light and often paints while standing in the ocean.

Gildea Contemporary Gallery is the newest of galleries on the island city, housing a diverse range of local and international artists owner Paul Gildea has selected to represent "something new to the Keys art scene," he says.

Ancizar Marin creates small figurative forms made of fiberglass and automotive paint that engage one another in dynamic groupings and can be rearranged at will. Pamela Kostmayer creates abstracts through collage, encaustic, shadowbox and assemblage with a spirit of spontaneity and surprise while reflecting her background in interior design. Emmy

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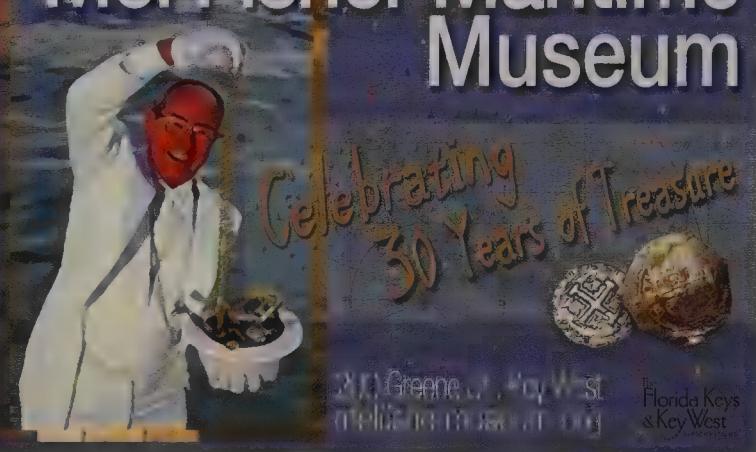
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PRISCILLA COOTE
Secret Smile, 2014, 30" x 40" Oil on Canvas

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ABOVE: Helen Harrison, *Surrounded*, 2012, paper, oil, brass, 24kt gold, wood, 25" x 20".

Award-winning artist Maria Sultan identifies with the Abstract Expressionists and has a defined vocabulary of line, form and color that transforms itself on the canvas.

Local AD Tinkham's poetic, minimalist landscapes border abstraction and convey a depth of movement and light and the essence of place. Local sculptor and founder of Sculpture Key West Jim Racchi works with steel, allowing him to "draw directly in space" with his columns that represent the figure, standing or in motion. And local Dick Buckheim, who has been exhibiting for the last 40 years, creates large abstracts and figurative work with equal skill and precision.

Photographer Alan Kennish offers his printing services to document, publish and reproduce these sophisticated artists with his high-tech Betterlight System, which allows him to render very high resolution, color correct images. As the only studio in South Florida with this equipment, Kennish has served over 150 clients in the last year alone. Kennish's work is an important element of the contemporary arts scene in the Keys, preserving what is for generations to come.

As the stopping point for international interaction with their southernmost neighbor coupled with the many creative artists drawn to the islands' physical and cultural climate, the Florida Keys and Key West will long continue to offer fresh, sophisticated perspectives sure to keep the contemporary art dialogue vital and growing.

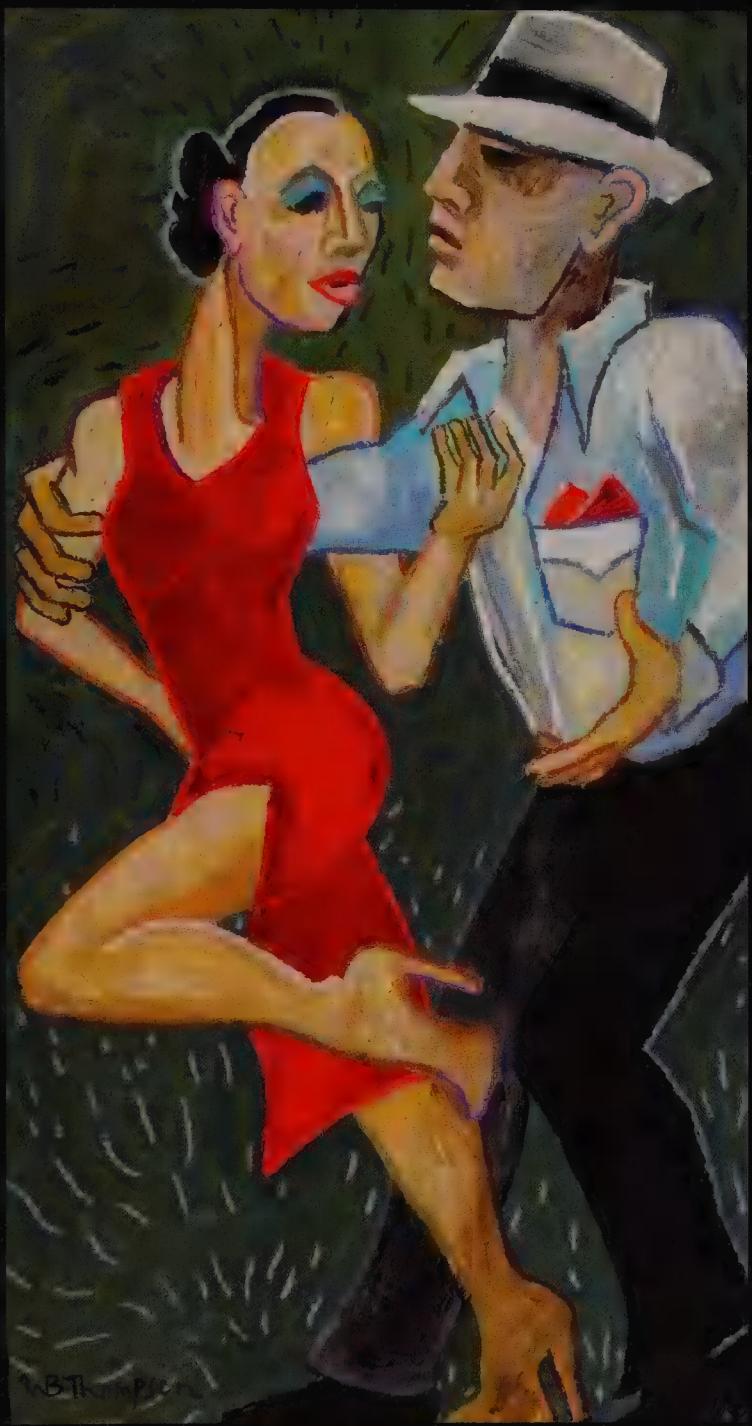
Cricket Desmarais has long been inspired by the history & arts of Key West & has lived there for over 15 years. Her first novel—a historical fiction piece set between Cuba & Key West during the WPA days, will be released (this month) through Salt Editions. cricketdesmarais.com

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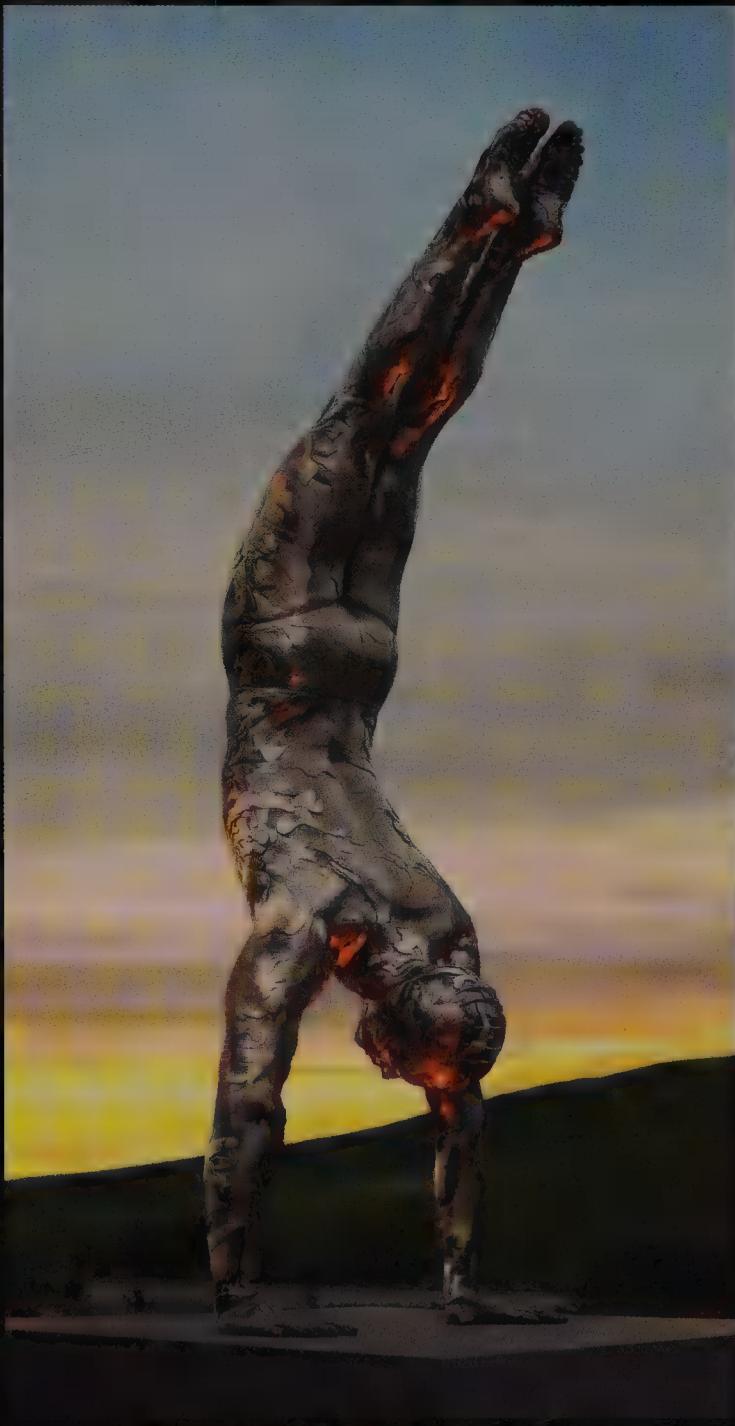
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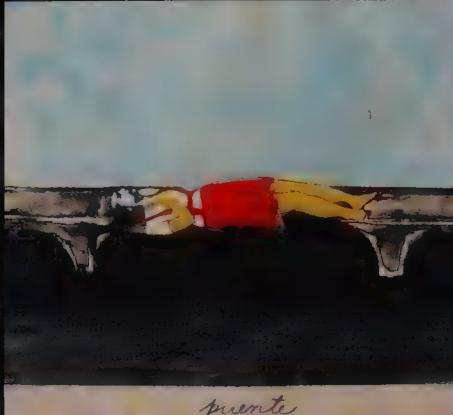
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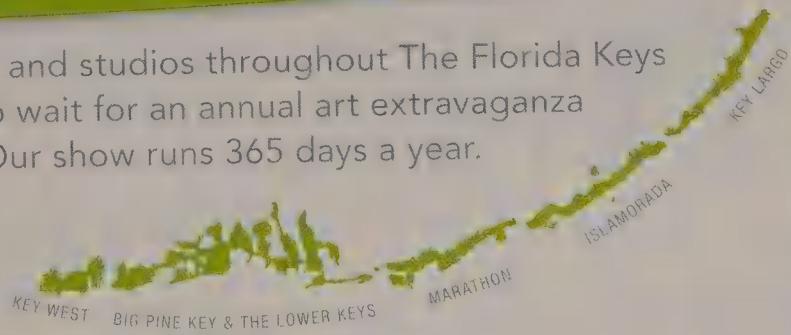
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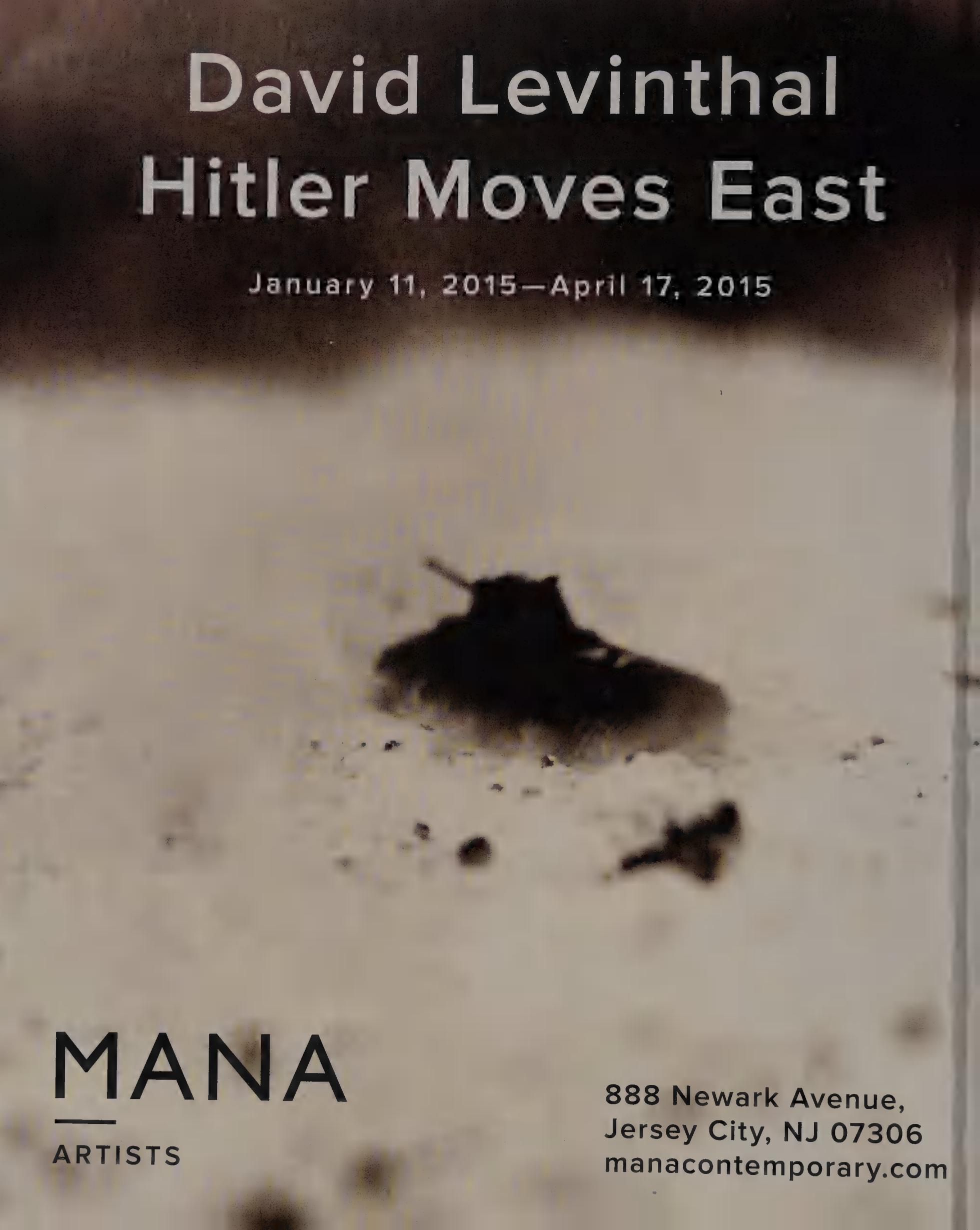
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AUTHENTIC SUCCESS

Kathleen White 1960-2014

BY GARY INDIANA

When Kathleen White moved to New York in 1987 she didn't have any friends, so she painted one. That's the quick story of a picture I can legitimately call haunting: *My Friend*. Seated, or perched, on a yellowish plinth that might be an ottoman or a traveling bag, one elongated forearm resting between his legs, the other extending from a slightly flexed elbow down to brittle fingers in a long red glove, the figure appears near a corner of a carpeted room, scumbled darkness streaked with light forming one wall, a nimbus of flames, even lava, crackling behind his head and shoulder.

My Friend shows you something of how Kathleen was, what she looked for in people, and what she hoped to find in the world, and sometimes did, sometimes didn't; this friend is subtle, complicated, more than a little hidden, freakishly beautiful and singular, his visible eye circumspect, his posture expectant; I'll let you bring me into your world, and/but I am who I am. The friend appears to me a shy person in a moment of realization that another human being possibly finds him lovable, maybe for the first time ever. The artist Katie Peyton has a more freighted take: "Haunted by the image of the friend. It is because of the terror in it, though it is accompanied by the sweetness of such an unguarded expression of loneliness. The terror is the fear of living alone, the impossible fact of dying alone. It opens that hot-to-the-touch negative-zero space inside, the black-hole number that can't be brought into focus." One view doesn't negate the other. This life is a fearful, lonely, terrifying thing, even between friends. We don't always feel the space between each other as the existential chasm that it is, but it's there. Still we have a natural desire for the warmth of contact and alliance: the need to love.

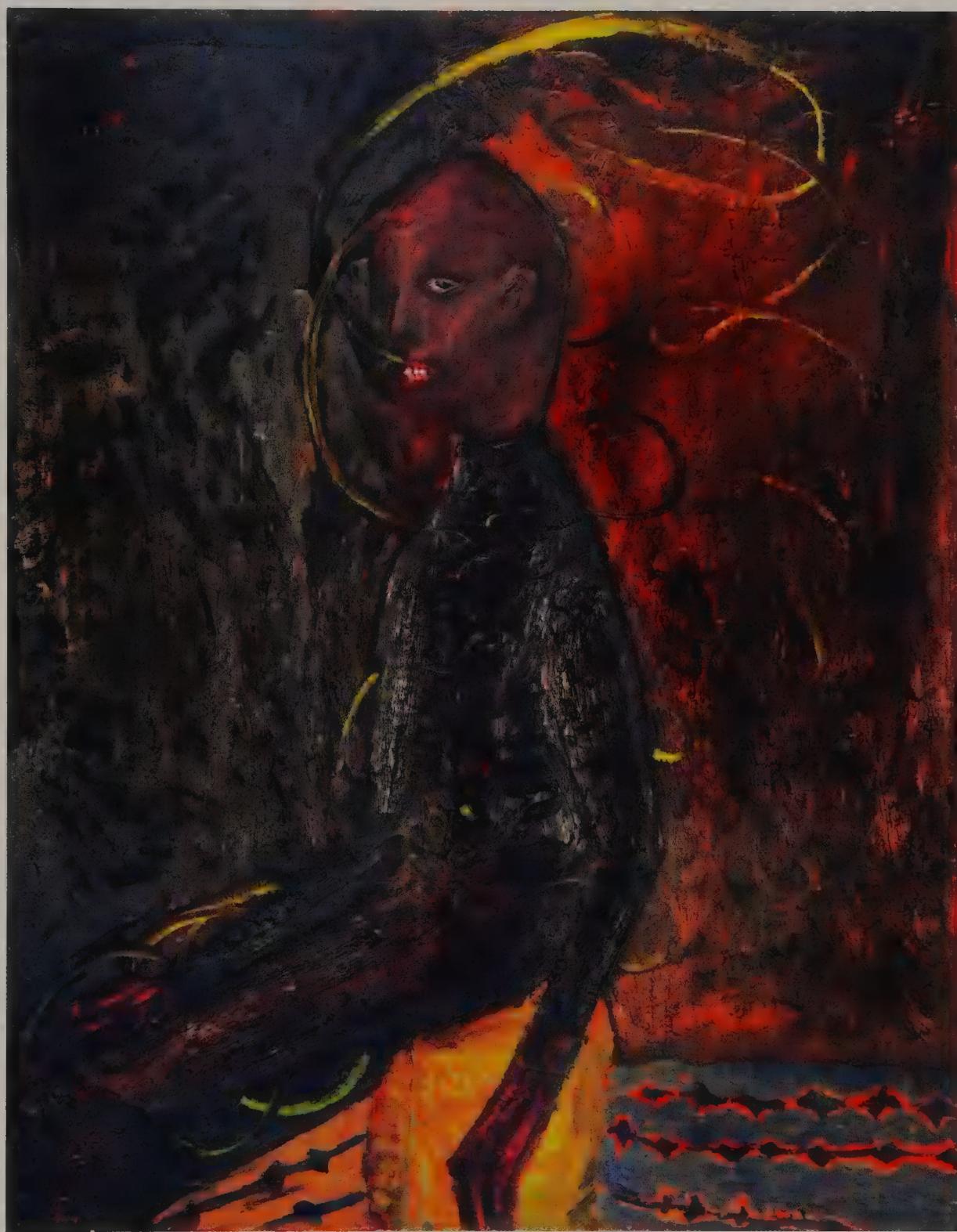
Is this friend an alien? If so, good. As an artist, as a person, Kathleen, who passed away last September, was drawn to what academic people like to call "Otherness,"

and others call out-of-the-ordinary people and things. She was attuned to the wound, and quick to appreciate the extravagant improvisations of the damaged. Her bullshit detector was faster than a bullet and scarily accurate. She loved disobedience and daring.

It isn't possible to summarize an artist's life and work in a few hundred words; I can try to evoke a sense of Kathleen's spirit, and hope that others—many others—will write more detailed, comprehensive articles about the art she produced over several decades: videos, paintings, sculptures, and sound works, remarkable for their emotional punch, aesthetic fastidiousness, wit, and concision. A great deal of her work sprang from loss and translates remembrance—of family members, of friends who died in the AIDS epidemic—into astute, depthful objects and manifestations of continuing resonance. Despite the anguished places she drew it from, her work is spiked with drollery and a sense of the absurd: I immediately think of *The Spark Between L and D* (1987), a performance in which the artist, dressed as a nurse, after soaking herself repeatedly in the head, licking blood off her fingers, and wiping them off with paper towels from a medical bag, proceeds to mummify herself in surgical gauze and tape she extracts from the same bag while singing, in distracted fashion, "On Broadway." The song becomes muffled and incoherent after she gags herself with a bandage. Like Winnie in Beckett's *Happy Days*, she has a bag full of interesting, useless palliatives that ultimately reduce her to silence. It's horrifying. And funny.

Kathleen was a long-distance swimmer in an alternative or parallel art stream that has existed in New York and elsewhere throughout the current period of art corporatization, enlivening an otherwise taxidermic art world where supermarket fairs and ingenious money laundering

OPPOSITE *My Friend*, ca. 1987-9, oil on canvas, 44" x 34".





predominate. She showed work when she felt moved to; mere opportunity didn't suit her way of doing things—once, invited by Ethan Shoshan to exhibit something in "Strange Birds," a show at the Center for Book Arts where artists displayed "objects that hold significant personal meaning to them," Kathleen offered nothing as her contribution. "Attachment will bite you in the ass, every time," she explained. "If you are so attached to some thing that it becomes your identity, what happens when that thing doesn't exist anymore? The best thing I have is what people have given me, and I have it inside of myself."

Unless it excludes everything else, there's nothing wrong with being career-minded, but Kathleen simply wasn't. She saw the effect celebrity and "personal branding" often had on other artists and didn't find it appealing. Authentic success was another story: she was glad when that came someone's way. She didn't have the envy gene. It simply wasn't there.

Her activity ranged beyond the creation of physical objects, in art carried out by other means. In collaboration with her husband, Rafael Sánchez, this included a sidewalk book table they set up nearly every day for a decade on Hudson Street. "By exposing other people to our 'precious goods,'" Kathleen said, "we're letting go of them, which gives them back to us, because it creates a dialogue that illuminates things that wouldn't necessarily have been brought to light if they'd been left on the shelves." They produced four issues of an "environmental magazine," *alLuPiNiT*, that featured contributors such as Hunter Reynolds, Luther Price, and TABOO!; Kathleen was herself a formidable wordsmith, and one of the best-read people I've known.

And one of the best artists. I was late to recognize this, partly because for some years I basically knew her as a voice on the telephone—a smoky, husky voice—that lived in the same apartment as a friend who was, more often than not, somewhere other than New York; I would call trying to catch the friend and end up talking to Kathleen, sometimes for hours, about everything imaginable. And partly because, during those same years, I avoided galleries and art exhibitions, for reasons I won't go into. As it happens I had seen her work in some group shows, and been startled by it, but didn't realize this "Kathleen White" person was the same Kathleen I spent hours on the phone with. So for years we knew each other intimately well and at the same time hardly at all. On the rare occasions when I saw Kathleen out and about, I knew this stylish woman who resembled Liz Taylor's Gloria Wondrous in *Butterfield 8* (with a more adventurous fashion sense) was Kathleen-who-lives-in-Sharon's-place, but the cognitive drizzle of today's world being what it is, I never entirely put them together until a few years ago. What can I tell you? She wasn't pushy. She didn't *implore* me to see what she was up to, she wasn't *hell-bent* on reminding me she was an artist, she didn't mistake me for an art critic or herself for the kind of artist for whom every *influential person* is there to be used like a Kleenex. I got it, finally, and now that she's gone, of course, I wish I had gotten it a lot sooner. ■

The Spark Between L and D, 1987, scan from a performance flyer xerox.

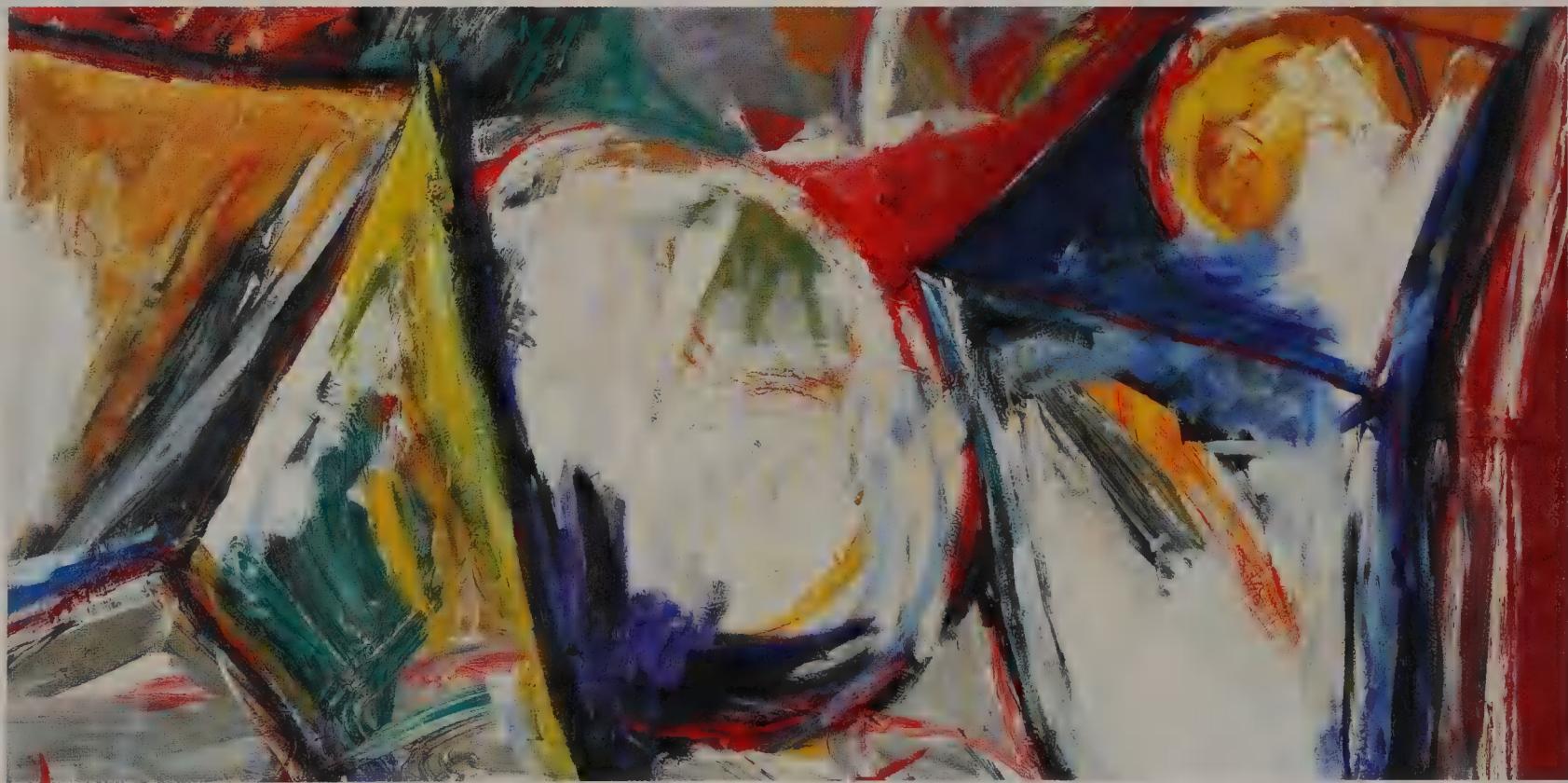
Gary Indiana is a New York-based artist and writer whose work over four decades, including a new film, YOUNG GINGER, will be sampled at Envoy Enterprises in NYC in March.

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LOOKING AT SEEING

David Hammons and the politics of visibility

BY ANDREW RUSSETH

Last spring, Mike Spano, the mayor of Yonkers, New York, a city of about 200,000 that shares a border with the Bronx, delivered his State of the City Address at City Hall. After describing Yonkers as a destination for “new-economy” companies—a developer of shared workspaces, a brewery, and a wine-storage business—he announced that the artist David Hammons would be opening an art gallery in South Yonkers. Hammons, who lives in Brooklyn, was in the audience.



To most eyes, this must have seemed like a fairly ordinary moment, a fine bit of municipal pageantry. However, for anyone who knows Hammons's reputation in the art world, it would have been an astounding sight.

The African American artist, now 71, has, for the past few decades, been famously, willfully, inaccessible. He is one of the most influential and in-demand artists of the past half century, but he has not had gallery representation, often sells work straight from his studio, rarely agrees to shows, and has given very, very few interviews in the past two decades. The *New Yorker*'s Peter Schjeldahl was one of the chosen journalists, but even Schjeldahl admitted that, when a misunderstanding about where he was supposed to meet the artist scuttled their first planned talk, "I weighed the odds that I was being treated to a custom-designed artwork." The appearance of a new Hammons work, in a group show or benefit, has the feeling of an event. The news spreads quickly.

Turning up at Yonkers City Hall seemed like a distinctly uncharacteristic thing for Hammons to do. Perhaps, I thought, he was having a change of heart. And so I tried to get in touch with him. I called the collector Lois Plehn, who I was told serves as Hammons's gatekeeper. "David is not going to do any interviews about the project," she told me kindly but firmly, when I finally reached her.

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THOUGH HAMMONS GUARDS HIS PRIVACY, MUCH OF HIS best-known art has been, in its way, resolutely public, albeit ephemeral. As a young artist in Los Angeles in the late 1960s and early 1970s, he gained attention for his one-off body prints—made by pressing a grease-covered body (usually the artist's own) to paper, then sprinkling the paper with powdered pigment—that anticipate performative works to come.

Hammons moved to New York in 1974 and in 1981, in two separate actions, he threw tennis shoes over and urinated on a hulking new Richard Serra sculpture that had been installed in fast-gentrifying Tribeca. In the winter of 1983, he staged his *Bliz-aard Ball Sale*, hawking snowballs at Cooper Union, New York's then-free art school. In 1985, as part of Creative Time's last "Art on the Beach" outdoor sculpture show before the site was swallowed up by Battery Park City, he built *Delta Spirit*, a wooden shanty house decorated with bottle caps set in the shadow of the World Trade Center towers. And in 1986, he installed a number of his *Higher Goals* pieces—

PREVIOUS SPREAD David Hammons photographed on September 2, 1980, in New York City. OPPOSITE *Higher Goals*, 1986, mixed media, 5 units, heights 20'-35'.







Dave Yamada '88

basketball hoops soaring 20 to 30 feet off the ground—in Cadman Plaza Park in as-yet-ungentrified Brooklyn.

These public pieces offered up a succinct map of societal systems in flux that now seems shockingly prescient. Last year, Cooper Union, whose founder, Peter Cooper, once declared that education there be as “free as air and water,” began charging tuition, having saddled itself with huge debts from an overambitious building project. Brooklyn, where Hammons once asked people to dream bigger, now has the least affordable housing stock in the country. (Harlem, where he first created those hoops, has been hit with its own condo boom. “Harlem is under attack,” he told Deborah Solomon in the *New York Times* in 2001. “White folks want it back.”)

Hammons’s actions and temporary structures are preserved as photographs and films, but also as stories, which may be filled with apocrypha. He made \$20 selling snowballs, or sold out, depending on what you read. As the writer Greg Allen has pointed out, various accounts of Hammons peeing on the Serra (the work is called *Pissed Off*), say he either got arrested or was threatened with arrest, or was issued a citation. Hammons has made an art of rumor.

Ambiguity has entered Hammons’s art in an even more purposive, physical way of late, as in his much-discussed 2011 show at L&M Arts in New York. The exhibition consisted of a number of punchy, swirling abstract paintings partially obscured by found tarpaulins or plastic sheets—the stuff of makeshift shelters, and the street—or, in one case, a hulking wooden armoire.

Hammons has also covered luscious drawings made

OPPOSITE David Hammons, *America the Beautiful*, 1968, lithograph and body print, 39" x 29½".

with Kool-Aid powder with curtains that can be lifted only under certain conditions. When one was shown at MoMA in 2012, visitors had to make appointments to view the work with a museum staffer and enter through a different entrance.

“[T]he efficiency, quantity and immediacy of information and information-systems has placed art and the artistic gesture at risk of being identified, categorized, digested, cannibalized and made into information before it has a chance to begin being art,” the curator Anthony Huberman has written. “Curiosity is being castrated by information.” Hammons’s paintings exemplify a considered response to that condition. They confront you with a sustained refusal, cloaked in beauty.

I HAVE HEARD THE CRITICISM FROM SOME THAT HAMMONS’S recent works, particularly these half-hidden paintings, are too directed at the art world—that they lack the incisive political bite, not to mention the gutsy aesthetic panache, of his “Spade” sculptures of the 1970s, his assemblages made with materials like hair and chicken bones and wine bottles, and his black, red, and green *African-American Flag* (1990).

To be sure, Hammons’s output of the last two decades has not been as overtly engagé, but it is no less directed toward specific ethical ends. As information overflows and as surveillance networks expand, his works increasingly block, or withhold, information, addressing the politics of visibility, of who and what can be seen and explained. This preoccupation with seeing was enacted most literally in his *Concerto in Black and Blue* (2002), for which he left the Ace Gallery in New York in pitch darkness, giving visitors little blue flashlights to navigate the space.

Hammons’s most recent exhibition was a 2014

survey of work from the past ten years, at London's White Cube gallery, which had him manipulating the conditions of display, of being seen, in new ways. One had the feeling of walking through an exhibition mid-installation, or even while it was being torn down. A security gate was partially lowered, and the lights were dim on the top floor, where a few of Hammons's basketball drawings—sheets of paper on which he has forcefully bounced dirt-covered balls—were on view. On an otherwise blank wall was a rectangular void in the dust and dirt, as if a painting had been removed. Ceiling light covers were missing. Four recent paintings, hung with tattered rags and plastic sheeting, were on view. One was placed across a concealed door to the gallery's loading dock. The door's drywall skin had been partially stripped away, exposing the opening to the public. It felt inappropriate to be there.

There was also a surprise inclusion—a humble little Agnes Martin painting, with repeating stripes of white and pale red, blue, and yellow, hanging on its own wall. Such inclusions have become a hallmark of Hammons projects. There was the Miles Davis painting that he offered to the 2006 Whitney Biennial in lieu of contributing his own work, which effectively undermined the curators' authority. Then there were the works by Donald Judd, Joan Mitchell, and Yayoi Kusama, which were included in an Ed Clark show that Hammons curated at New York's Tilton Gallery last year (all three were friends with Clark). He enters the institution on his own terms, taking authority as he pleases.

In an essay, Philippe Vergne, one of the organizers of that 2006 Whitney Biennial, termed the Davis painting a "premeditated enigma," and added, "This event—not to be understood or understandable, not to be seen, but to be conceived as a verbal enigma—possibly insinuates that we are culturally, aesthetically, miles away from assuming the full consequences of its occurrence."

"Hammons tries to make art in which white people can't see themselves," artist Lorraine O'Grady has said, and while that's clearest when he's using hair from black barbershops and items from African American culture, there is a similar negation in these new works. In them, he informs you that there are things that you cannot see, and that you cannot know.

IT'S ANYONE'S GUESS WHAT HAMMONS HAS PLANNED FOR Yonkers. Perhaps there is a clue in the catalogue for his 1993 show at the Illinois State Museum in Springfield, Illinois, his hometown, in which he talks about having a private museum there, a place to show his work. It might also be a place to show other artists' work—either a fully functioning commercial gallery or a non-

profit alternative space.

The week before Christmas, I made the trip to the gallery's future site. The BxM3 bus dropped me off at Radford Street on South Broadway, the town's main commercial strip. There's a McDonald's, a smattering of pizza places, a non-chain pharmacy, a few vacant storefronts.

The building that Hammons bought is a 5-minute walk away, past a few modest suburban homes and a block of public housing. It's next door to the community affairs office of the Yonkers Police Department. There's a storefront church and soup kitchen nearby, but otherwise it's a sleepy section of town.

Hammons's space, at 39 Lawrence Street, is a one-story brick building with tall ceilings, filling a lot that measures two-thirds of an acre, about 29,200 square feet. According to property records, an entity called Duchamp Realty LLC, which is registered to the artist's home address in Brooklyn, bought it for \$2.05 million in January 2014. Construction permits for roof repair, issued a few months before I visited and valid well into 2015, were plastered over a door.

Whatever the Yonkers gallery becomes, it will join many of Hammons's works as a marking, and reconfiguration, of public space. Slipping just beyond city limits, it denotes a hallmark of our time: artists' flight from the moneyed playground that New York has become. "I've always thought artists should concentrate on going against any kind of order...but here in New York, more than anywhere else, I don't see any of that gut," Hammons told the art historian and curator Kellie Jones in 1986, anticipating this moment. "Because it's so hard to live in this city. The rent is so high, your shelter and eating, those necessities are so difficult, that's what keeps the artists from being that maverick." Perhaps "Duchamp Realty LLC" is another clue: one might see the gallery as an assisted readymade, a former industrial space redirected toward a new purpose.

On the day I visited the site, the sound of a jackhammer was ringing through the neighborhood. It seemed to be emanating from within the building, but there was no obvious way in. The gates were down and locked, and looking through the high windows, I could see the sky peeking through sections of the roof that there were missing. I bought a slice of pizza and headed back to Manhattan. ■

OPPOSITE *Untitled*, 2014, mixed media on canvas and blue tarpaulin, 137" x 123".

Andrew Russeth is co-executive editor at ARTnews.



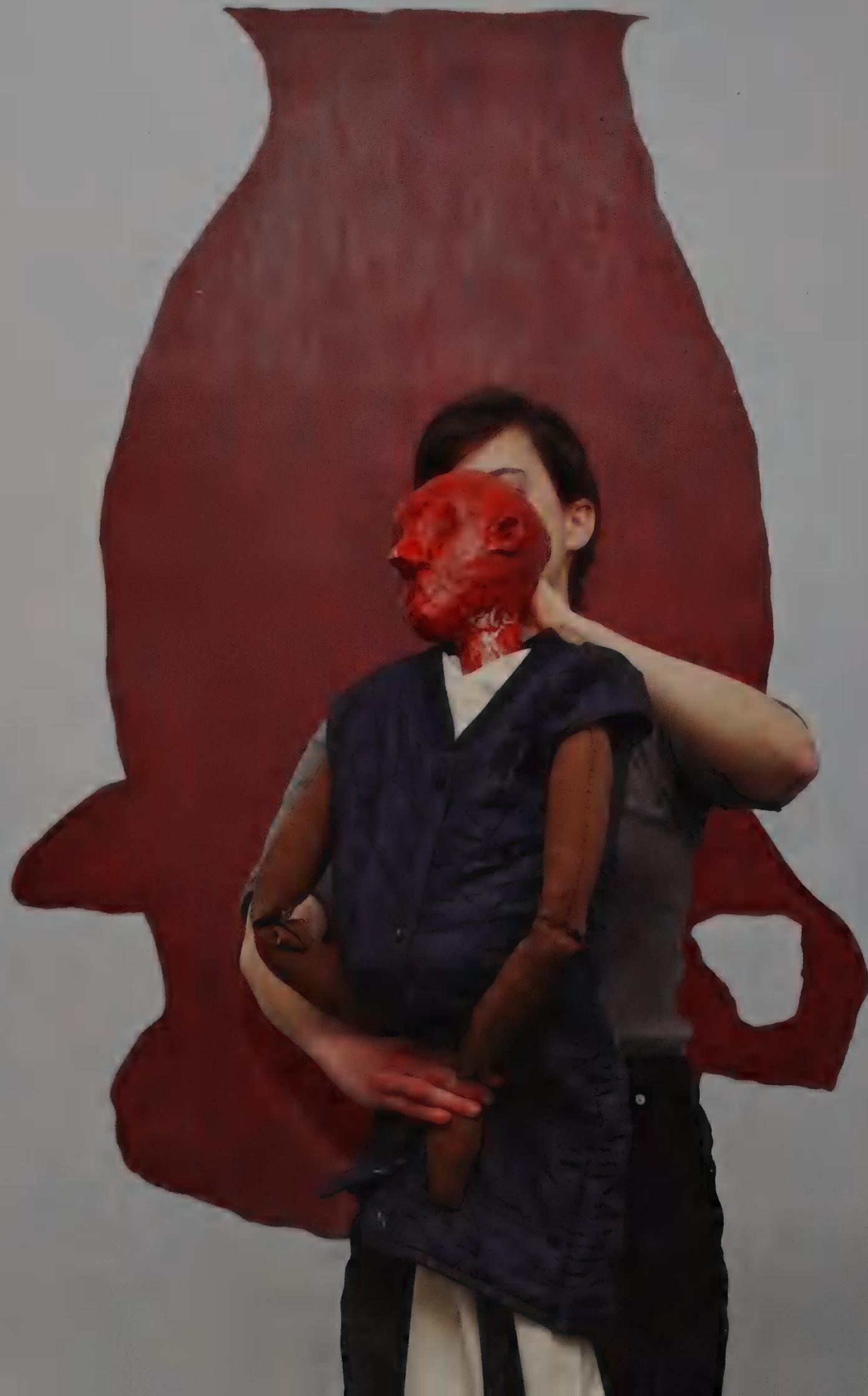


THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT

The New Museum Triennial's different approach
to a contemporary-art survey

BY M.H. MILLER

The contemporary-art festival—biennials, triennials, quadrennials, and so forth—has a lot working against it right now. The main focus of these kinds of exhibitions is to offer a slice of what contemporary art is at a given moment in time—a basically futile task of taste and editing that can only fail in the eyes of anyone who pays attention to these things. And so the criticism—positive or, more often, not—tends to turn into a numbers game: Why so many painters? Why so few artists of color? Why the gender imbalance? These are all legitimate questions to ask of the art world at any moment, so these exhibitions become a useful blanket excuse to confront recurring dilemmas, get angry about them, and then move on until, two or three years down the road, the exhibitions of the past have come to seem prescient, or at the very least better than you remembered.



The New Museum's 2015 Triennial, its third, opens this month. It comes at a time of existential crisis in the art world, and takes this notion to heart. The exhibition focuses on 51 emerging artists from all over, like Londoner Ed Atkins and Brussels-based Israeli Shelly Nadashi, and includes many participants showing work for the first time in the United States. Ambitiously, the New Museum describes it as "predictive," a means of identifying what contemporary artists will reckon with in the years to come.

But, like any large group exhibition, it is also embedded in the present, wrapped up in all the conflicts facing artists just beginning their careers today. For instance: auction houses increasingly feel like high-stakes horse betting. There is now a major art fair somewhere in the world every month of the year. Gallery exhibitions are too often a way of meeting dealers' massive overhead costs. Though ostensibly devoid of a commercial component, any serious exhibition today can't help but become a kind of response to the ever-ballooning art market. Jens Hoffmann, the deputy director of New York's Jewish Museum and a curator of many biennials himself, shared the following story: While he was teaching a curating class at Goldsmiths College in London a few years ago, one of his students asked him what Documenta was. He described it as "the most prestigious large-scale group exhibition in the world, with hundreds of participants that display their artwork." To which the student replied, sincerely, "Oh, just like the Frieze Art Fair."

"The art world is going through a big transition at the moment due to the changed status of the object, the dominance of the market, art's relationship to the digital world, the unclear role museums are playing," Hoffmann wrote in an e-mail. He speculated that the New Museum Triennial might be "the first [show] to fully capture that change."

IF NOTHING ELSE, THE 2015 TRIENNIAL, ORGANIZED BY New Museum curator Lauren Cornell and artist Ryan Trecartin, may be the first large-scale museum exhibition to credit its existence to an astrologer.

"Ryan had agreed to do the show in part because of our friendship," Cornell said, "and in part because his astrologer told him he was going to be playing more of a producer role in 2015." She laughed at this, but she wasn't joking. "His astrologer is thanked in the show," she said.

Trecartin was included in the first New Museum Triennial in 2009, "Younger Than Jesus," named for the

PREVIOUS SPREAD DIS, studies for *The Island*, 2015, codesigned by Mike Meiré. OPPOSITE Shelly Nadashi, *A Good Bowl of Soup*, 2013, installation and performance, Sotoso, Brussels.

cut-off age of its participants. Cornell, then the executive editor of Rhizome, an arts organization devoted to new media and affiliated with the museum, acted as his liaison. Cornell said that a two-and-a-half-year curatorial project—she and Trecartin were announced as the organizers of the 2015 Triennial back in April 2012—is "like a relationship. I knew he was somebody that I would want to commit to in that way. I can argue with him and we can get over it."

The two set out to bring together artists who were, in Trecartin's words, "shattering our understanding of what art is." The exhibition's title, "Surround Audience," is both a nod to Trecartin's work—surrounding an audience with art, which he accomplishes by installing his videos in rooms crammed with props and furniture—and, more to the point, a reference to mass surveillance. Cornell and Trecartin began working on the show right around the time of the Edward Snowden leak, after which Cornell conducted a lengthy interview with Laura Poitras, the filmmaker who helped release Snowden's information to the wider world.

Whatever problems mire the art world, the real world is always worse. This year's Triennial makes this political backdrop explicit. As a rule, few exhibitions of this kind have been so unabashedly topical, with the exception of the 1993 Whitney Biennial, which, held in the wake of the L.A. riots, had admission buttons by Daniel J. Martinez that read "I CAN'T IMAGINE EVER WANTING TO BE WHITE." Recent countrywide protests sparked over the institutionalized murder of unarmed black men by police have clearly affected American artists—at least as much as the "image-laden culture" touted by the museum as one of the show's primary touchstones.

Josh Kline, a New York-based artist, goes so far as to use retired police officers in his video works in the Triennial; they will be seen reading social-media feeds that refer to police brutalities. The videos will be installed in "police Teletubbies," as Kline described them, "three paramilitary statues that have TVs embedded in their stomachs." ("And they'll have Teletubby faces," he said.) For another video in the show, Kline worked with David Meadvin, a former speechwriter for Barack Obama and Harry Reid, on an imagined Obama speech about Ferguson and Eric Garner—the kind of rallying cry the public would have expected from the Obama of 2008 that has since been muted by so much politics.

"There was a moment when everyone was kind of holding their breath when he would start speaking because they were so excited," Kline said. "Then I remember watching the inaugural address at work—and

people were waiting for this transformative figure who just didn't emerge. It was like a different speaker almost. That more pragmatic, more deliberate, less emotional speaker has been with us most of the way ever since."

Niv Acosta, a black transgender performer, takes a more oblique approach to the issue of race, choreographing a performance that is, Acosta said, "a culmination of research on sci-fi, disco, astrophysics, and locating the black experience within that." This has resulted in a disco space opera starring four queer black performers, partially inspired by Diahann Carroll's bizarre cameo in the *Star Wars Holiday Special*, which aired on CBS in 1978.

IF THE POLITICIZED REPRESENTATION OF BODIES AND language in the art world and beyond is one strand of the show—evident also in Frank Benson's 3-D sculpture of the transgender-renaissance woman Juliana Huxtable (a Triennial artist herself), and in the installations of Njideka Akunyili Crosby, who deals with "what it means to be a cosmopolitan Nigerian"—the other side of the exhibition features the kind of futurist imaginings embodied by Trecartin. DIS, a "digital media platform" that looks at how creative fields—particularly art, fashion, and media—have become increasingly corporatized by new technology, was one of the first participants asked to show at this Triennial. (Several of its members have appeared in Trecartin's films.) Their work is like a Crate & Barrel catalogue by way of Mike Kelley, a campy indictment of commercial enterprise mixed with a genuine savvy for Madison Avenue-grade advertising. For the exhibition, they are fusing both strands together—the intellectual and the banal—by installing in the museum a "hybrid kitchen and bath" designed by Dornbracht, a crafter of luxury kitchen and bath fixtures. Lauren Boyle, one of DIS's members, described Dornbracht as "super, super high-end. Their website is phenomenal."

Dornbracht came to the group through Google's recommended ads. The search engine "caught on to the fact that we were researching art and," Boyle said, "apparently luxury kitchens and baths. We kept getting ads for Dornbracht." DIS will invite performers to stage talks and events within the space—allowing people to philosophize while, for example, making a grilled cheese sandwich. Dornbracht's "trademark piece," Boyle said, is a horizontal shower, which will be constructed inside the museum. It's a contraption with five fountains that gently rain down on the bather, who is lying down on a long bench.

ABOVE Josh Kline, *Hope and Change*, 2015, production still from an in-progress video.





"So we're gonna have a woman come in there and shower with her clothes on," Boyle said. "It's gonna be pretty weird."

Horizontal showers aside, this year's Triennial is more or less a vertically integrated exhibition, if one could imagine such a thing, with every component, down to even the publicity campaign, acting as a piece of the show. The ads are in fact a commissioned artwork featuring a cartoon pill that can be seen on posters for the Triennial engaging in a variety of debased activities—binge drinking, smoking, tanning—beneath slogans such as "I'll Triennial Once" and "We Really Tried This Time." The campaign was masterminded by K-HOLE, an art collective and "trend forecasting group," which—like the ad campaign itself and similar to the mentality of DIS—exists simultaneously as an ironic commentary on and earnest participant in the very ideas it criticizes. Last year the group coined the term "normcore," which would have merely been a good joke if it hadn't been adopted into American vernacular to become an actual trend. The term, which originated from the humorous reports that K-HOLE releases as free PDFs on its website, was shortlisted by the Oxford Dictionaries as the word of the year. (Oxford's definition: "a trend in which ordinary, unfashionable clothing is worn as a deliberate fashion statement.") It lost to "vape." Greg Fong, a founder of K-HOLE, said the Triennial ad campaign taps into what he calls our "post-rational times."

"You only need to watch one Super Bowl ad for one minute to know that we live in a time when signs and symbols and markers have reached—I wouldn't say their minimum value, but they're more lightweight and malleable than ever," Fong said. "Rather than be freaked out by this fact, we wanted to celebrate it. And even if it doesn't bring people in the door, maybe it will help them understand that institutions can also be run with a sense of humor."

Though not every artist in the exhibition bares his direct influence, this celebration masquerading as institutional critique places K-HOLE and DIS thoroughly in the tradition of Trecartin, whose films both revel in the fact of digital life and sinfully document its chaos. Trecartin was one of the first artists to understand the Internet as portentous, but entertainingly so.

"A decade ago feels like a century," Trecartin wrote in an e-mail when asked about the progression of his work. "I think the last decade was so accelerated we don't even truly

understand how to identify the changes that have happened and how they have affected society and human behavior."

This Triennial is an attempt to understand. In fact, Trecartin's work provided inspiration for the first Triennial in 2009. Massimiliano Gioni, the New Museum's associate director and a cocurator of that show said he felt compelled to organize an exhibition around this theme after encountering a Trecartin film for the first time; watching the film he had experienced a sense of, to use Gioni's word, "terror."

"It was 2006 and I was 33," Gioni said. "I felt like I was facing someone who was clearly younger than myself, who belonged to a different moment in time. So on one level, the show was a means of bridging a generational gap, but also came from a fear of being pushed out of my own time, that I needed to understand this whole new different way of making art."

The fact that Trecartin's work seemed to at least signal a kind of paradigm shift in the preoccupations of contemporary art has caused a unique dilemma in terms of organizing this new Triennial. Cornell referred to Trecartin as a "generational icon"—not the usual phrase one would use to describe a curator.

"People see Ryan as if he is going to deliver the future to them," Cornell said. "I think that people think the show is gonna be, like, a hologram, or fly in on a UFO. There are quite a few projects that have a digital component but it also is a *show*, you know?"

She continued: "Every exhibition like this, it's not about being liked. The Whitney Biennials I saw in the early aughts were really important to me and formative. I saw artists of my generation in them, which made me feel like I had a place in the art world. But, like all biennials, they were trashed by everybody. But, I think you know that you're going to put your life into something for two and a half years, and then people will, if not trash it, then at least have infinite opinions on it."

As for Gioni, he'd welcome another wave of terror.

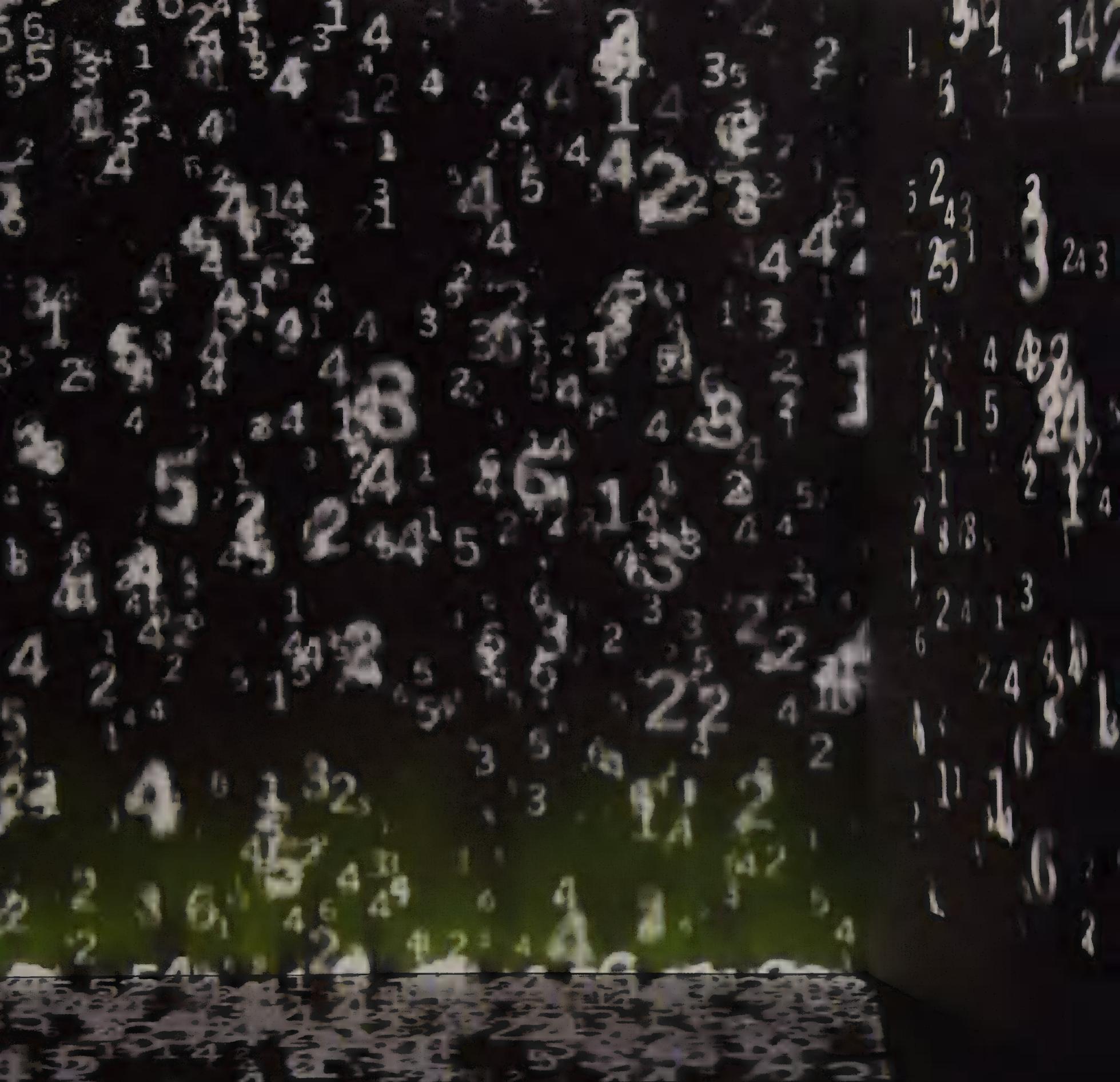
"I'm excited to be made to feel old when this exhibition opens," he said. ■

The New Museum Triennial runs from February 25 to May 24.

OPPOSITE Firenze Lai, *Tennis Court*, 2013, oil on canvas, 40" x 30".

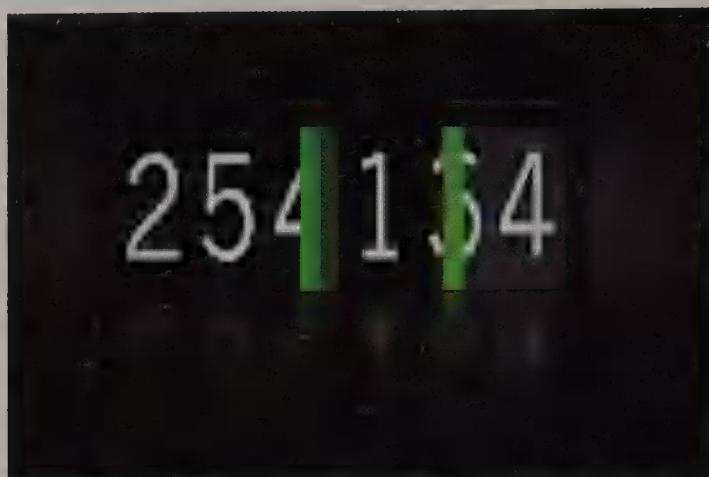


READY FOR PRIME TIME



Charles Atlas stars in Chelsea and Times Square

BY BARBARA POLLACK



Though Charles Atlas has worked in and mostly out of the art world for more than four decades, he still seems every bit the maverick. He has collaborated with Merce Cunningham, Yvonne Rainer, and Marina Abramović, as well as with Antony and the Johnsons, and Mika Tajima and the New Humans, spawning a new genre of “media dance” while creating many of his own live video performances.

It now appears that Atlas, long a cult figure, has moved closer to center stage. This month, he will open a solo show at Luhring Augustine gallery in Chelsea with a nine-channel video work titled *The Waning of Justice* (2015). Incorporating footage of sunsets, which he shot while living on Captiva Island as a Rauschenberg Foundation artist-in-residence, the work is only obliquely political, conjuring a mixture of references that evoke the fading of an era.

Yet it will be hard to top the exposure Atlas received last December when his video *You Are My Sister (TURN-ING)*, 2014, played on 50 screens in Times Square. A collaboration with singer-artist Antony, the project reconfigured footage from a performance that highlighted the strengths and iconoclastic beauty of a troupe of downtown New York women—performance artists, transgender models, even a stunning mathematician—turning in place, evoking contemporary goddesses. The original performance was filmed and released as the documentary *Turning* in 2012 to wide distribution and critical acclaim. Still, it is a surprising choice for the Times Square Alliance’s Midnight Moment, projecting portraits of performers like Kembra Pfahler and Johanna Constantine on screens normally reserved for advertising and Broadway stars.

“Both Charles Atlas and Antony are exceptional individuals who have collaboratively created a work that conveys the many layers and diversity of femininity, beauty, and strength and that commands the respect of everyone’s communal sisters,” said Sherry Dobbin, director of public art at the Times Square Alliance.

“For years, I have imagined having my videos play in Times Square, so I guess you could say this opportunity is a dream come true,” says Atlas, 66, thrilled to see his work spread across the NASDAQ sign and the Marriott Marquis. When asked if this mainstream attention could dull the cutting edge of his work, he laughs, “I am too old to sell out.”

ORANGE IS ATLAS’S FAVORITE COLOR. HE WEARS A SPLASH of it on top of his head. Born in 1949, he sits in the spacious New York railroad flat where he has lived since the late 1980s. His editing-and-filming studio takes up what may once have been a formal dining room and parlor. His two cats sit nearby. In the back bedroom, Atlas’s domestic partner, poet Joe Westmoreland, starts his day. The two have been together since 1989, when they attended a DANCENOISE performance at La Mama on their first date. They met at the Pyramid Club where Westmoreland, wearing an orange sweater, attracted the attention of Atlas, sporting an orange leather jacket.

“I didn’t know what I was going to be, but I knew I was getting out of St. Louis,” says Atlas, recalling his unremarkable childhood, his years as an A student. His father was a traveling salesman and his mother, a housewife. He attended Swarthmore College, where he became involved in theater production, studied English, and thought he might become a professor. But then he



visited New York just for fun one weekend, and succumbed to the lure of art and the city. In 1970, without graduating, he moved to Avenue C. His first job was as a proofreader at a law firm. During that time, he was also volunteering as stage manager at Judson Memorial Church, then the headquarters of avant-garde dance and performance art. A year later, when he learned of a job opening at the Merce Cunningham Studio, he applied for it and was hired.

"The only dance I had seen was Merce Cunningham, and the only reason I went was because of his collaboration with Bob Rauschenberg. So I was thrilled to get the offer," Atlas relates, noting that one of the first Cunningham works he had seen was *Winterbranch* (1964), performed in darkness and lit by flashlights. "It was silent for the first ten minutes, and then the next minute was the most horrifying screech. Horrible.

"At the time, I didn't know what I wanted to do," he continues, explaining how that was okay in New York in those days. "Now," he says, "you have to know right away and be successful at it instantly." He was more than a little intimidated by Cunningham, who was already recognized as one of the leading American choreographers, but the two gradually began to collaborate. Atlas's first job was to blow up silver pillows that had been created by Andy Warhol for the set of *RainForest* (1968), a sensation with six dancers. Atlas would bring a Super-8 movie camera along on tour and make little films in his hotel rooms. Eventually, he began filming the dancers and made his breakthrough when he filmed *Walkaround Time* (1968), a work choreographed by Cunningham and inspired by Marcel Duchamp. In

1974, when Cunningham wanted to incorporate video into his work, he invited Atlas to join him.

"When I made *Walkaround Time*, I had some ideas, and I was trying things, but it was definitely a first film. Everyone liked it, and everyone wants to see it because it is historic. It's kind of embarrassing to me now," Atlas says. He went on to study filmmaking on his own and learned many things about dance from Cunningham as they began to shoot and review rushes. "It was completely open-ended. We were funded to experiment, and that's what we did." He describes how they started with one video camera and one dancer, looking at the body on camera, even before they made a single piece. "We would explore all the possibilities of any given situation: What is the possibility if you have a dancer and a camera? What are the possibilities if you have two cameras? It was all about possibilities," he says. The first piece they made together is called *Westbeth* (1974), in which Atlas filmed both close up and with great depth of field, finally layering images to create the equivalent of a montage.

"This early-on collaborative process and engagement with the medium was groundbreaking," observes Jenny Moore, now executive director of the Chinati Foundation, who as a curator at the New Museum presented, in 2011, an installation called *Joints Array* (2011), in which

PREVIOUS SPREAD Atlas's *Painting by Numbers*, 2011, is a mesmerizing three-channel synchronized video projection. ABOVE first three images, left to right, installation views of the single-channel video *143652*, 2012, from "The Illusion of Democracy" at Luhring Augustine, and far right, from *Painting by Numbers*.



Atlas reworked early footage of Merce Cunningham. Focusing on individual body parts—elbows, knees, ankles, and wrists—we can recognize that we are watching the choreographer practice his iconic moves, even though we never see his face. “What I find so inspiring about Charlie’s work,” Moore says, “is he is always making while he’s doing; he’s always learning while he’s doing; there’s an energy that is always present and palpable.”

By 1983, Atlas was production manager, lighting designer, and videographer in residence with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. He was working with three cameras connected to a switcher, which allowed him to view three angles at once. It would take two months to complete a production, with Atlas on camera and editing and Cunningham choreographing. Every gesture was planned in advance. Atlas had already begun experimenting with swipes, blurs, and multiple exposures—effects that are now easily accomplished with After Effects software. He was also beginning to work with other dance companies and performers and wanted to stop touring and make his own films. After ten years, he left the company. “That was kind of treated as betrayal, but when I left, three people replaced me, one getting to do just what I wanted to do,” Atlas says, adding, “It was kind of traumatic.”

ATLAS LOOKS TO SUBCULTURES AND ALTERNATIVE ART scenes for his ideas. After working with Cunningham, he moved to London, attracted to its club scene in the 1980s. Leading that scene was the flamboyant Leigh Bowery, best recalled as the Lucian Freud model, who always wore gender-bending costumes and face paint. Atlas, who had been introduced to the notorious London choreographer Michael Clark by American choreographer Karole Armitage, began working with Clark on lighting design and costumes. As a result of this relationship, Atlas was commissioned by BBC Channel 4 to make a feature-length “documentary” about Clark, from which the film *Hail the New Puritan* (1985–86) was born. A fictionalized account of a day in the life of Clark, the film stars Bowery, who, like many of the characters performing in it, spends much of his life getting ready to go out to clubs. Atlas then made a second film with Clark, *Because We Must* (1989), and a more conventional documentary about Bowery in 2002. The artist continues

TOP AND BOTTOM Charles Atlas and Antony’s *You Are My Sister (TURNING)*, shown between 11:57 and midnight in Times Square throughout December 2014.

to work with Clark as a lighting designer, for which he has won top awards. Their most recent collaboration was a production at the Barbican in the fall of 2013.

“One of the motivations for making *Hail the New Puritan* was that I thought, ‘This just can’t last; you can’t live like this and keep dancing’—it was just too much fun,” says Atlas, who happily acknowledges his life as a “clubber.” Though he describes himself as more moderate than some of his companions, he looks back on London at that time as “the most interesting place to walk around the streets, because people just had a different sense of style, testing the limits of how far to go visually.”

Throughout the ’90s Atlas continued to collaborate with choreographers and make countless films, often working for television companies, such as WNET, WGBH, and BBC Channel 4, all of which set aside air-time for experimental productions. (In fact, he still works in television, producing segments of ART21 on PBS.)

One day, sitting in the office of Forensic Films, an indie-film production company, he overheard someone say, “Wouldn’t it be great if artists made porn films?” He promptly volunteered to do just that, and within the year he was shooting *Staten Island Sex Cult* (1999) in a brothel. “It is a pity that we don’t have documentation of the way we were getting this done because that was really hilarious, but we didn’t have a budget for a second camera crew,” says Atlas, noting that this was the first film he made that he edited entirely on his own computer. “I remember at the time thinking, ‘Here I am; I’m spending six months editing a porn film, and Bill Viola is having a show at the Whitney,’ ” he says, adding, “That’s the difference.”

Though Atlas had been included in the 1991 and 1993 editions of the Whitney Biennial, he didn’t have his first gallery show until 1999, at Xavier Laboulbenne gallery in Chelsea. Working in a site-specific way, he tailored his piece—four video “portraits”—to the exact dimensions of the gallery. Four years later, he took the whole concept of live video portraits a step further, taking over Participant Inc., a nonprofit gallery space on the Lower East Side, and turning it into his personal laboratory. He sent out an announcement tailor-made for exhibitionists, calling for people to come to the lower level of Participant and perform for his camera while he mixed their footage with other material and projected it live in the gallery space above. Among those who attended was Merce Cunningham, then quite old but still able to elegantly navigate the stairs.

“I was thrilled he wanted to work with us, and it was

my assumption that we would do some sort of survey, but when it came time to plan the exhibition, Charlie's wish was to show no existing work whatsoever," says Participant director Lia Gangitano. "It was pure spontaneity. We had no idea what people would do at any given time."

Indeed, since 2000, Atlas has gone live, mixing live footage with prerecorded material and projecting the results. His first attempt at this difficult feat took place at the Kitchen when critic Linda Yablonsky invited artists to provide visuals as authors were reading. "I was the only person who did something live for that. Most people just presented a video behind someone reading," says Atlas, who recalls that the technology was still so rudimentary that he was literally inserting VHS tapes, rather than using a computer. "I just thought it was a progressive thing to do since the technology was going there."

Since then, Atlas has pioneered another technological advance—using media to extend the qualities of performance. Now he seems irrepressible, often using an exhibition as an opportunity both to show historic videos and create a new live performance.

"What he has been doing—with all the technical skills he has on hand, with all of his theatricality and spontaneity, with all these gifts that he got from Merce and other dancers—has kind of freed him up from having to serve other people, and he has brought these abilities to the forefront," says Elisabeth Sussman, curator at the Whitney Museum and cocurator of the 2012 Whitney Biennial, in which Atlas participated. To demonstrate how much Atlas will do given the chance, he orchestrated a live event with performance artist Johanna Constantine; presented a jumbo projection of *Ocean* (2011), his video of a 2008 Cunningham ballet staged in a quarry in Minnesota as a project for the Walker Art Center; and provided the lighting design for a dance performance by Michael Clark—all at the same 2012 Whitney Biennial.

"Atlas was one of the first people to think about the live feed and how you could manipulate that," says Stuart Comer, chief curator of the department of media and performance art at MoMA. "He was doing a lot of mixing and very experimental approaches to how you could trace movement through a moving image. He wasn't just turning on the camera and passively watching a performance."

The year 2012 was a watershed one for Atlas, when in addition to participating in the Whitney Biennial, he saw the release of his feature documentary *Turning* and

his first venture with Luhring Augustine gallery.

"I had the privilege of seeing how a lot of these ideas and techniques began and then became these amazing bodies of images that just get more beautiful and complex," says Constantine, who remembers trying out the rotating platform for *Turning* in Atlas's living room years before it was incorporated into the performance. A frequent collaborator with the artist, Constantine creates movements and costumes that she thinks will complement Atlas's video-editing techniques, but she admits that a lot is up to chance. "Charlie and I trust each other implicitly. Like I didn't know what images he would use, and Charlie isn't sure what kind of costumes I would use," she says. "That is what is so exciting about the live performances; we don't know what it is going to be but we know it is going to be great."

For Luhring Augustine's inaugural show in its Bushwick, Brooklyn space, Atlas created *Painting by Numbers* (2012), a silent work composed solely of white numbers that swirl around like tornadoes against a black background. "I wanted to do something that didn't look like anything I had ever done before," Atlas says, "to see what rules I had unconsciously made for myself and break them." He got the idea from the copious collection of notebooks he used for his films, filled with numerical notations for input and output codes. He considers this work possibly his most Atlas-esque because of that connection to his process.

"Of course, I am elated about all of the stuff that has happened for Charlie. I think it's a testament to what a great artist he is that he takes every opportunity to experiment further," says Gangitano. She adds, "It's not about looking back and monumentalizing the past; it's always about how each opportunity is a way for him to make something he hasn't made before."

When asked if she believes success will change Atlas, Gangitano replies, "He has always found a way to make his art and be who he is without the support of the commercial art sector, so it also is a big change for him to have all this support coming from places he never sought out. I always thought, 'Great, Charlie can make a living doing broadcast television,' and that's what he's done for the majority of his career, not relied on the art market, and I think it's not going to change." ■

Barbara Pollack is a contributing editor of ARTnews.



A still from Atlas's *Hail the New Puritan*, 1986, a 16mm film transferred to video.





THE CURIOUS NINETIES

The decade is back big-time—but whose '90s is it, anyway?

BY LINDA YABLONSKY

At a dinner party several years ago, a group of artists who emerged in the 1990s were talking shop. They traded stories about museum shows they'd seen as students. Each named an exhibition that later influenced the kind of artist he or she became.

That conversation came to mind when I heard about the upcoming exhibition "Come As You Are: Art of the 1990s," opening February 8 at the little-known Montclair Art Museum in Montclair, New Jersey. The show's curator is Alexandra Schwartz, who founded the hundred-year-old institution's department of contemporary art four years ago and has been researching this exhibition ever since. She borrowed its title from a popular song by Nirvana, that archetypal '90s band from Seattle, capital of '90s grunge.

Schwartz conceived the show after noting that the 20th anniversary of the 1993 Whitney Biennial was not far off. Now 42, she saw that exhibition as an undergraduate at Harvard. Largely reviled at the time for privileging thorny topical issues like race, sexuality, and AIDS over aesthetics, and almost completely disregarding traditional painting and sculpture in favor of installation and video, it now sits in the pantheon of super-historic exhibitions.

In the catalogue for "Come As You Are," Schwartz calls that year's biennial "a crucial juncture in my intellectual formation," and confesses to a kind of nostalgia for the '90s, "one of the most controversial, but indisputably rich, periods in the recent history of art."

In this she is not alone. Jens Hoffmann, the 40-year-old deputy director of the Jewish Museum in New York, included the biennial in his recently published book, *Show Time: The 50 Most Influential Exhibitions of Contemporary Art*. Most of those shows took place in the '90s, when, he says, curators began to inhabit a creative, rather than just a scholarly, role, making exhibitions "as vehicles for intellectual, cultural, social and political investigation and expression that transformed how art and the public interrelate."

Just two years ago, New York's New Museum mounted "NYC 1993: Experimental Jet Set, Trash and No Star." The exhibition's title also came from alternative-rock music—specifically a 1993 album by the '80s post-punk band Sonic Youth. One of the show's four curators, the museum's Italian-born artistic director, Massimiliano Gioni, is 42—the same age as Schwartz. What the 1993 Whitney Biennial was to her, that year's equally politicized Venice Biennale was to him.

That Biennale's director was Achille Bonito Oliva, who put Helena Kontova, then the publisher of *Flash Art* magazine, in charge of the Aperto or "open" section dedicated to emerging artists. It was the Aperto that excited Gioni. "It was there, in the Arsenale, that I got a sense of one era coming to an end and another beginning," he wrote in an essay that he contributed to the 2011 Phaidon anthology *Defining Contemporary Art: 25 Years in 200 Pivotal Artworks*. The exhibition, he says, "redrew the map," bringing artists from China, Africa, India, Thailand, and more. He calls it the "very first really global and multicultural biennial." Judging from the frequency of such shows around the world today, it

obviously started something.

Kate Fowle, the 43-year-old chief curator for the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow, considers the '90s a turning point for contemporary art everywhere. Last summer she organized "The New International," the last of three exhibitions at the museum focusing on art made after the demise of the Soviet Union. "In Moscow the 1990s can be considered the first decade that 'unofficial' or 'underground' art was made public," she says. Her show included artists from Russia, Europe, and America who became established during the decade along with those just coming of age then, and who were addressing the politics and social structure of the time. "The resonances of the 1990s to the current moment," she notes, "became a focal point because all the crises that evolved at that time in Russia are still playing out now. It was important to show works that Moscow hadn't seen before, and that had an enormous impact on me."

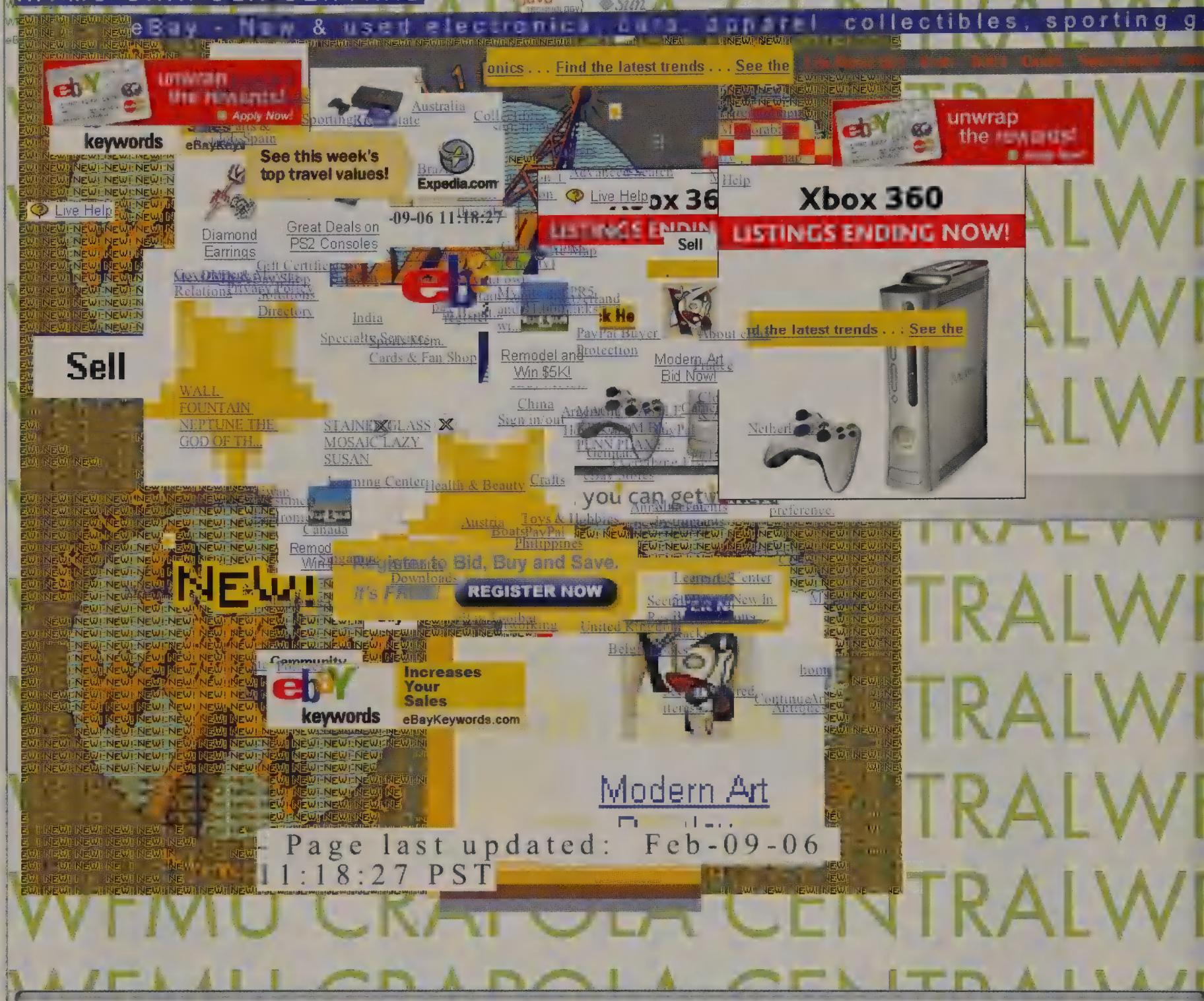
Last August the Centre Pompidou-Metz opened “1984–1999. The Decade” (on view through March 2), a group exhibition put together by the independent curator Stéphanie Moisdon. The show historicizes the work of a loosely connected group of artists—among them Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Liam Gillick, and Angela Bulloch—associated with the ’90s art movement “relational aesthetics,” a form of art-making that involves multiple disciplines, takes shape only with the participation of viewers, and is arguably the only significant new direction for art that came out of the decade in question.

Schwartz was in Metz for the opening. "The installation was designed by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster," she says, "and was actually part of the show. It's more focused on relational aesthetics in Europe, particularly France. My show has Rirkrit Tiravanija, Jorge Pardo, and

PREVIOUS SPREAD Nikki S. Lee, *Hispanic Project* (25), 1998, Fujiflex print, 21½" x 28½". OPPOSITE Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *Untitled (Loverboy)*, 1990, blue paper, endless supply, 7½" at ideal height x 29" x 23" (original paper size), installation view of "Felix Gonzalez-Torres," Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York. 20 Jan.–24 Feb. 1990 (top); Diana Thater, *Ginger Kittens*, 1994, two flat-panel monitors, two DVD players, one synchronizer, green gels, installation view (bottom).



WFNU CRAPOLA CENTRAL



Andrea Zittel, and focuses on work made in America." There's a reason for that. As Schwartz says, "The '90s were the last time you could do a nationally based show, when the globalization of the art world and the rise of international biennials and fairs were not so much a part of the landscape as now."

Relational aesthetics endured. In 2008, the Guggenheim Museum's chief curator, Nancy Spector, commissioned new works for an exhibition called "theanyspacewhatever" from ten artists identified with the practice: Philippe Parreno, Pierre Huyghe, Gillick, Pardo, Carsten Höller, Bulloch, Maurizio Cattelan, Douglas Gordon, Tiravanija, and Gonzalez-Foerster. In this case, the works weren't from the '90s, but the artists and the interpersonal ideas involved were.

Personally, until I became aware of all of these shows, I had little desire to revisit the '90s, even though they were extremely productive, even exciting, years for me. I'm still trying to reckon with the post-Watergate, pre-AIDS culture of the '70s.

What started with the art of the '90s is still with us, even if the politics are different. "Some of the artists who were doing things that were shocking then we take for granted now," says Gary Carrion-Murayari, 35, another curator of "NYC 1993," which I thought a rather tepid recapitulation of that year's Whitney Biennial. Times have changed. "Nobody's protesting Chris Ofili today," he says. "But we are indebted to what was important at that time, things we didn't experience, and we try to get at what these works meant at that moment."

For Schwartz, "The 1990s felt like a very fertile time for art that engaged in social and political issues. The market today is so consuming that these alternative voices don't have as strong a platform as they did then. The rise of contemporary art as a global phenomenon with enormous economic might also happened then."

But, she says, the biggest game-changer was the digital revolution. "Come As You Are" includes work by Julie Mehretu, Sharon Lockhart, Kara Walker, Andrea Fraser, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, and Elizabeth Peyton, but it gives pride of place to nearly forgotten Internet art by Mark Napier, Mark Tribe, Aziz + Cucher, and Prema Murthy, among others, as well as one of the first Internet works to intervene with a digital institution. Just before 9/11, the married couple Keith and Mendi Obadike invited users of eBay to bid on Keith's blackness. The company pulled the sale after four days, claiming it was inappropriate. "It's significant that Internet art didn't last because there was no object to sell," Schwartz says. "Today, many painters use technology. So that was really a big change."

IN FACT, THE NINETIES TOOK PLACE ON WHAT NOW SEEMS an intriguing distant planet, when the art world didn't cater to money in the same way that it does today. The Clinton years were ones of discourse and dissension. They

saw the birth of the Internet, the death of privacy, the advent of globalism, and the colonization of cyberspace. Bookended by the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall and the attacks of September 11, 2001, the '90s don't easily come into focus. That may be because they were years of transition. Stuff happened.

While communism collapsed in Europe, genocide took place in both Bosnia and Rwanda. Bombings of the World Trade Center and a federal building in Oklahoma City brought terrorism to America. Los Angeles burned after the Rodney King verdict, the Supreme Court gained an archconservative in Clarence Thomas despite revelations of sexual harassment by Anita Hill, and Lorena Bobbitt cut off her husband's penis. The divisive Culture Wars peaked and died, Viagra went on the market, and rap went mainstream, anticipating the disappearance of a progressive underground.

If there wasn't any radical break with the past in art, as there had been in the '60s and '70s, the '90s may nevertheless stand as the last time there was real excitement in art. Think of the shows we regard as landmarks now. Not only the 1993 biennials at the Whitney and in Venice, where identity politics held sway, but Paul Schimmel's "Helter Skelter" at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, one of the freakiest shows of 1992 and possibly the darkest ever. It gave serious credibility to Mike Kelley, Paul McCarthy, Raymond Pettibon, Liz Larner, Lari Pittman, and others who took their subject matter from pop culture and twisted it till it screamed.

"Sensation," at the Royal Academy of Art in London in 1997, didn't just give a name, and a world stage, to young British artists like Damien Hirst, Tracey Emin, and Chris Ofili, and it didn't just give Mayor Rudolph Giuliani a hissy fit when the show arrived in New York. It changed art, and possibly art collecting as well. So did "Traffic," the 1996 group exhibition at CAPC musée d'art contemporain in Bordeaux, France, that took passive viewing off the table and led curator Nicolas Bourriaud to coin the term "relational aesthetics." One could say that such participatory art, where viewers "activate" environments created by the artists, predicted the social-media networks of today. And Thelma Golden's 1994 "Black Male" show at the Whitney challenged racial attitudes by mixing work by white artists with that of African Americans like Glenn Ligon, Gary Simmons, and Lorna Simpson, who had never shown in a museum before.

But museums weren't the only places where the artists who came to prominence in the '90s were wreaking havoc.

Exhibitions also took place in publications, and in hotels like the Carlton Palace in Paris, where the young Hans Ulrich Obrist staged an exhibition, or the Gramercy in New York, where the Gramercy International Art Fair, the forerunner of New York's Armory Show, began in 1994 as the brainchild of four art dealers—Pat Hearn, Colin de Land, Matthew Marks, and Paul Morris. Many of those participating in the fair represented a new generation of dealers producing shows for artists their own age.

Among them, Stuart and Shaun Caley Regen stepped up to present Matthew Barney's first show in Los Angeles. David Zwirner brought Jason Rhoades to New York, Gavin Brown promoted the work of Elizabeth Peyton and Tiravanija, and Andrea Rosen did the same for Gonzalez-Torres (who died of AIDS in 1996 and whose work is included in all three of the current '90s revival shows) and John Currin at her first gallery in SoHo.

"The most important show for me when I was starting out was Felix Gonzalez-Torres's first at Andrea Rosen," says Jens Hoffmann. "But if there's a nostalgia for the 1990s now, it may be coming out of a longing for something more discursive that was lost along the way. Theory and politics don't matter so much anymore. We have other issues to grapple with."

For me, a child of the '60s, a life-changing exhibition was "New York Painting and Sculpture, 1940 to 1970" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, which I stumbled into in 1969. It included Robert Rauschenberg's *Monogram* (1955–59), the stuffed goat with a paint-spattered nose and a rubber tire circling its middle like a belt. Encountering it, I was dumbstruck. I was an English major. I didn't know something like that could be art. But clearly it couldn't be anything else.

That's still my reigning definition of an artwork—something that can't explain itself any other way. And that's still the kind of experience that points the way forward.

So I can understand why people who came of age in the '90s might regard them as pivotal. I'm newly curious myself. Memory is faulty. I can also see why those years would attract curators of that generation. The decade's history hasn't been written yet. Their shows are closing the gap. ■

PREVIOUS SPREAD Mark Napier, *Riot*, 1999. OPPOSITE "Experimental Jet Set, Trash and No Star," 2013, installation view.

Linda Yablonsky is a roving critic and journalist based in New York.





Martin Puryear, *Big Phrygian*, 2010–14, red cedar and paint, 58" x 40" x 76".

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MARTIN PURYEAR

MATTHEW MARKS
NOVEMBER 8 - JANUARY 10

Martin Puryear's first solo show with Matthew Marks was a virtuoso riff on the theme of the Phrygian cap, consisting of ten sculptures and two etchings that take the 18th-century symbol of liberty far beyond its political connotations. True, Puryear did discover, as he was at work on the monumental *Big Phrygian* (2010–14), an image of a black man wearing a similar red cap with the caption "Moi libre aussi" (I too am free), but there was no cause-and-effect relationship involved. The slave is evoked, but Puryear is not mounting the barricades.

What he did do was transform the Phrygian cap into a leitmotif: every piece in the show alluded to it, but did so both seriously and playfully. This was especially the case in the room-size *Untitled* (2014), a huge playground construction made of hardwood saplings. This sculpture transforms the cap into a "thinking cap," one we might enter, scale, and transform into a model of our own mind. It may well represent Puryear's statement on the

dangers of freedom: total freedom is also total anarchy.

The same notion, that the cap is an aid to reflection, recurs in the *Faux Vitrine* (2014), a stand-alone piece made of mirror-polished stainless steel. Here Puryear metamorphosed the cap into a tower of mirrors, perhaps to jar us with the idea that merely donning a cap does not really change who we are, that the cap may be a disguise. The piece inevitably evoked a clown's hat, which in turn recalled the fact that the Phrygian cap is the favorite chapeau of Mr. Punch, sublime mischief-maker, libertine, and criminal.

In terms of Puryear's career, these caps are a gust of artistic liberation: light, full of fun, intellectually complex. This artist's hallmark is elegance, but here we found a sensibility akin not to the 18th-century revolutionaries of the Phrygian cap, but to witty, sensual artists like Houdon, Fragonard, and Boucher. Puryear is a purveyor of Rococo mirth joyfully tweaking the nose of sculptural solemnity.

ALFRED MAC ADAM

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MIGUEL FLORIDO (b. 1980), *You*, 2013, oil on canvas, 70 1/2 x 50 3/4 inches

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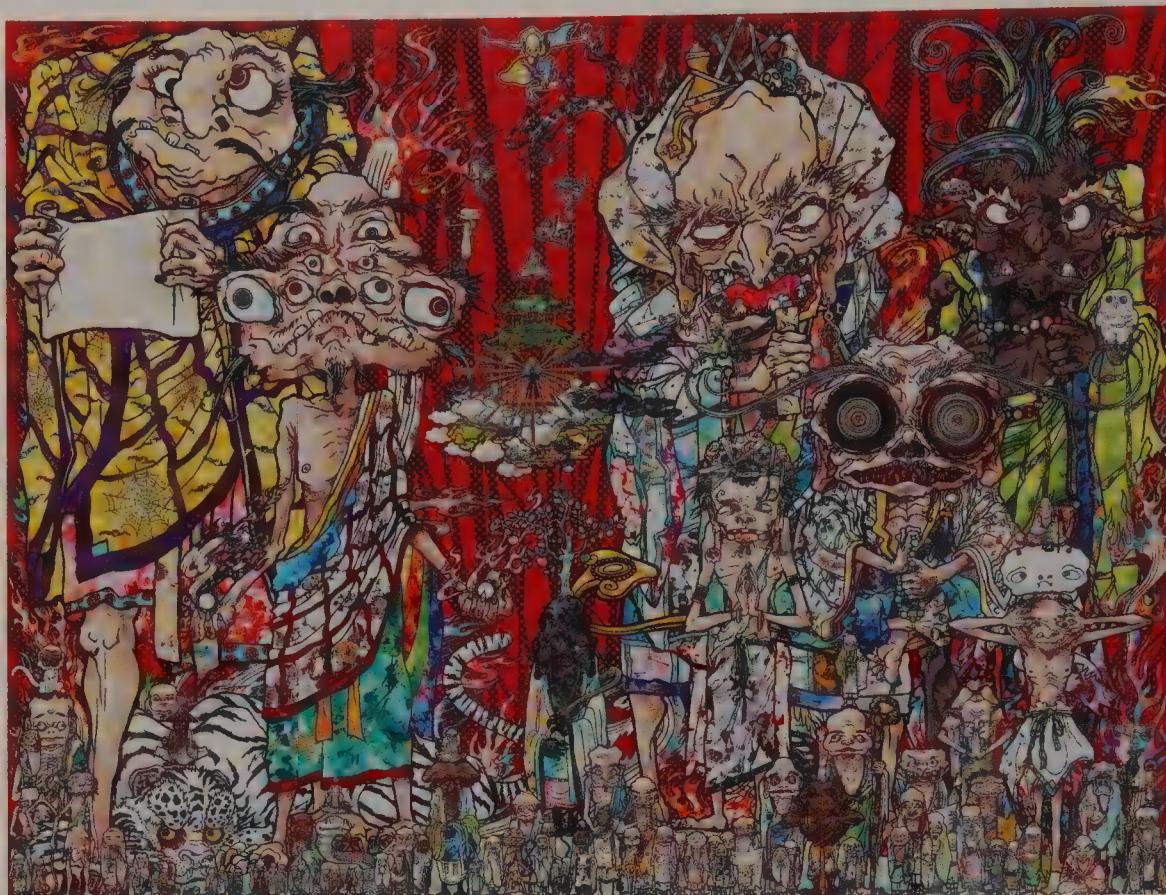
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Takashi Murakami, *Isle of the Dead*, 2014, acrylic, gold leaf, and platinum leaf on canvas mounted on wood panel, 141^{3/4}" x 189".

80

TAKASHI MURAKAMI

GAGOSIAN
NOVEMBER 10 - JANUARY 17

Aptly titled "In the Land of the Dead, Stepping on the Tail of a Rainbow," Takashi Murakami's first show in New York in five years was an absolute stunner, venturesome and dark.

Murakami understands that if you're going to spend serious cash making a show, you may as well go all the way. He opened with a 56-ton, 21-foot-tall replica of a Zen Buddhist sacred gate (complete with soaring wooden columns and a stone base), which gave way to a pair of 14-foot-tall *karajishi*, the lions that protect temples. They are devil-like and monstrous, equal parts mythical deities and ferocious action figures. They hold huge clubs, hungry for violence.

Now comfortably mid-career, Murakami, 53, has always worked best on a grand scale, and a suite of relatively humble tondos (they're only five feet across) adorned with flowers are handsome, but seem hollow—mere decoration. His large paintings and sculptures, though, are as immaculate, luxurious, and inventive—gold leaf,

platinum leaf, never a stroke visible—as anything the artist's large team of artisans has ever produced, and the subjects are even more manic and unwieldy than those of the past. The worlds they inhabit are coming undone, and the cartoon and human figures within them look deranged. Skulls are everywhere.

Murakami has also escalated the ongoing arms race among artists making gargantuan shiny sculptures—Jeff Koons currently leads—with a formidable 14-foot totem of stacked cartoon monsters, leafed in gold and seemingly on the verge of tipping over.

In a comparatively modest sculpture (it was platinum-plated, but just six and a half feet tall), titled *Invoking the Vitality of a Universe Beyond Imagination* (2014), the artist poses himself with mouth agape, frightened. He's balancing two heads on top of his own—one is deflated, the other is rabid-looking, with sharp teeth pointing in every direction. He is keeping it together, but just barely.

ANDREW RUSSETH



Richard Pousette-Dart, *White Circle, Time*, 1979–80, oil on linen, 90" x 90".

81

RICHARD POUSETTE-DART

PACE
NOVEMBER 7 - JANUARY 10

This Richard Pousette-Dart show was a knockout. A founder of the New York School of painting, Pousette-Dart (1916–92) is best known for his earlier, imagistic paintings. The works here, fiercely concentrated in composition, were mostly from the 1970s through the 1980s and represented a departure.

These two dozen or so paintings and works on paper were based on the centrally placed images of circle, square, and rectangle in various permutations, with black, gray, white, and red the dominant colors. But that says very little about their impact. Their real power lies in their insistent painterly presence—"Presence" is in the title of two of the paintings—and must be experienced directly. Often, their physicality approaches the three-dimensional, but that then shifts into less definable terrain. Bursting with short, quick strokes that consist of a number of other colors—blue blacks, green blacks—these staccato markings merge in a kind of pointillism when seen from a certain distance and

produce an intermittent radiance, the colors subsumed into a flickering scrim of light.

The four most satisfying works were all circles within a 90-inch-square field and were all gradations of black and white. *Presence Number 3, Black* (1969), the earliest work in the show, almost all black, pulls you into the heart of cosmic darkness, while *Presence, Circle of Night* (1975–76) appears as both solid and void, the great black circle held in a dense white matrix. *White Circle, Time* and *Black Circle, Time* (both 1979–80) consist of a white and black ring, respectively, surrounded by a flecked and fissured black background or a looming white one in which circle meets field to produce a scintillating, osmotic exchange of forces, conveyed by the deliberately slurred edges.

Pousette-Dart believed, along with Mark Rothko, Ad Reinhardt, and Clyfford Still, that abstract painting had the power to conjure the transcendent. Looking at these paintings, it would be easy to agree.

LILY WEI



Judy Pfaff, *Belle Isle*, 2014, melted plastic, paper lanterns, pigmented expanded foam, acrylic, and resin, 50" x 61" x 32". Loretta Howard.

JUDY PFAFF

LORETTA HOWARD AND PAVEL ZOUBOK
OCTOBER 18 - NOVEMBER 15

82

One of modernism's most durable dichotomies opposes nature to culture. Judy Pfaff's spectacular two-venue exhibition paid homage to the distinction between the forces of nature and the effects of human activity, but what was most strongly conveyed was the chaos that comes from their intermingling. The Zoubok show, titled "Second Nature," employed natural and "unnatural" materials—insulation foam, resin, bone, leaves—to create wall-hung and suspended sculptures evoking unbridled nature, while a net of metal tendrils in the center of the gallery entangled two pieces of gnarled driftwood. Wall works evoked fantastic undersea landscapes or bizarre fungi, and large collages made reference to art history and 19th-century field guides and botanical illustrations.

"Run Amok," at Loretta Howard, investigated the experimental geometries of modern art. Here the works displayed brilliant and even garish colors and occasionally neon lights. Some titles referred to mid-century abstraction, and the sculptures featured Op-like concentric circles or layers of translucent plastic. Several landscape-like sculptures suspended from the ceiling were overrun with whiplash-green lights. Though formally distinct, the shows shared an explosive exuberance. Yet they also expressed an undercurrent of disquiet.

ELEANOR HEARTNEY



Joseph Montgomery, *Image Two Hundred Sixty Three*, 2014, oil and acrylic on cedar and linen, 16" x 10 3/8" x 2 1/4". Laurel Gitlen.

JOSEPH MONTGOMERY

PETER BLUM
OCTOBER 24 - DECEMBER 6
LAUREL GITLEN
OCTOBER 26 - DECEMBER 21

These two shows highlighted Joseph Montgomery's handsome constructions that reside in the gap between painting and sculpture. They are both image and form.

At Peter Blum, for "Doll Index," Montgomery explored the versatility and metaphoric possibilities of the shim—an angled wooden slat whose purpose is to level and fill in spaces. Two digital animations were displayed on monitors mounted on a wall-papered surface bearing corresponding imagery.

Montgomery discovered a way to give life to his virtual shims. *Image Two Hundred Forty Eight* (all works 2014) suggests a person made of rendered and balanced triangular shims "walking" away from viewers toward a vanishing point. *Image Two Hundred Fifty Four* is a looped animation in which one "doll"—a sticklike figure—squats and gives birth to a replica of itself. There were also constructions made of studio detritus, shims, and shards of earlier pieces. Each work seemed to refer to its neighbor, its past, and to modernism.

At Laurel Gitlen, the shim appeared as a conceptual and physical touchstone, and several of the wall works—all dubbed "images"—were composed of fragments of older pieces. These particular works evinced a trophy head of a person or animal. Perhaps Montgomery was presenting these "heads" as self-portraits, each hiding in plain sight.

DOUG McCLEMONT



Klara Liden, "It's Complicated," 2014, installation view.



R. H. Quaytman, *O Tópico, Chapter 27*, 2014, oil, silkscreen ink, and gesso on panel, 32 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 52 $\frac{3}{8}$ ".

KLARA LIDEN

REENA SPAULINGS FINE ART
NOVEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 7

The cumbersome sculptures in Klara Liden's austere installation on the gallery's second floor looked like high-end packing crates, but they were actually hefty benches and tables made out of wood originally used for scaffolding. Sawed into portions unable to stand on their own, they were supported by metal "crutches," as balance was removed and then restored. Running over some pieces and across the floor, the remnants of a pair of fuzzy pink lines spray-painted over tape connected the work in a mazelike fashion. This weightless skein of absence reappeared on three illuminated plastic jugs hanging over a counter in an abandoned Chinese restaurant on the first floor. Chairs, tables, food, and people were the only things missing from the darkened dining room.

Weight and balance were also issues in *Warm Up: Hermitage State Theatre* (2014), a wall-size video shown in the empty restaurant, featuring Liden inserting herself into a professional ballet warm-up. Visibly more awkward and always slightly behind, she gamely tries to follow the dancers' polished movements. The video could be seen in a mirror on the opposite wall, sandwiching viewers between a projection and a reflection. By imagining their own attempts to join in the exercise, spectators could participate in Liden's uncomfortable Duchampian readymade.

ELISABETH KLEY

R. H. QUAYTMAN

GLADSTONE
OCTOBER 31 - DECEMBER 20

Like other R. H. Quaytman shows, this one was site specific, except that the gallery where it was held was not the site. Rather, the permanent site will be Inhotim, a botanical garden in Brazil. This exhibition replicated how these 27 pieces were to be deployed in a pavilion designed by Solveig Fernlund, who had also reconfigured the gallery space for the Gladstone show.

Setting aside the complex intellectual issues that Quaytman delights in (Fibonacci sequences, the golden spiral) and the autobiographical element (each of her exhibitions is a chapter in a book, this one chapter 27), the works are wonderful.

The exhibition's title, "O Tópico," means subject or topic, but—especially in the Brazilian context—echoes the word *trópico*. Echoes and reiterations unify the individual pieces the viewer came upon in the small but labyrinthine version of the pavilion. These motifs allow Quaytman to control the totality while giving free rein to her will to diversify.

One work summarized the show: a blondish teenage girl leans against the hood of a dilapidated VW Beetle, sunlight glowing at her back. It is a reference to Pop, a reminiscence of the 1960s, and a reminder of Brazil's cult of youth, but all framed in the geometrical configuration that appeared in the works themselves and in the space that housed them.

ALFRED MAC ADAM



Lauren Jones Worth, *Avant Garden*, 2014, mixed media on canvas, 24" x 36".

MEIGHEN JACKSON & LAUREN JONES WORTH

WALTER WICKISER
NOVEMBER 1 - NOVEMBER 25

Here were shows by two artists, Meighen Jackson and Lauren Jones Worth, who, despite their interest in similar nature motifs, create very different work. Jackson's mixed-media pieces, composed of ink on various kinds of paper, accented with photographs, foil, and rich swathes of pastel-hued paint, were both spare and poetic. Ghostly photographs of grasses and bamboo growing vertically across the canvases were painted over with thick, luxurious patches of black ink winding through the reeds like calligraphy.

In *Jacob's Marsh* (2014), the technique and imagery were fractured across six oblong canvases, spread across the white wall, resembling tree trunks in a forest. As our eyes trained over the panels and spaces in between, we could experience the illusion of motion.

Lauren Jones Worth also paints nature-scapes, and, in such close proximity, her work bore comparison with Jackson's. However, unlike Jackson's delicate, airy pieces, Worth's paintings came off as cramped and crowded. The tree branches stretching across the canvases left no apertures through which to peer and no room for breezes to seem to rustle their leaves. Every inch was filled with heavy color, lending the works the look of dark stained-glass windows, or of damp forest floors—heavy, flattened, and decomposing, almost sagging under their own weight.

ALEXA LAWRENCE



Alexander Ross, *Untitled*, 2014, oil on canvas, 60" x 50".

ALEXANDER ROSS

DAVID NOLAN
OCTOBER 30 - DECEMBER 6

Alexander Ross can be an acquired taste. Balancing the weirdness of his subject matter and technique in this show, "Recent Terrestrials," were some traditional painterly tricks that lent subtle formality to the compositions and served to manipulate our focus. An incidental-looking red mark on a face, for example, can interrupt our reading of an image and force us to reassess how and what we're seeing, as when a monster head sticks its tongue out of a squishy blue face where its eye should be. We are challenged to investigate and respond—even if we don't know to what and how.

Among the most charming pieces was a smallish crayon-on-paper composition (2014) that filled the sheet to the edges with a compressed head-as-landscape sporting a tongue and fangs and various other oddities.

The big canvases were more enigmatic-looking, like painting-sculpture hybrids. Ross creates them by molding plasticine, photographing the forms, and then thickly painting the images. In so doing, he adds layers of artistic and archeological distance.

Neither abstract nor figurative, three-dimensional nor two-dimensional, real nor recognizably imagined, these paintings were not-quite-but-almost kitsch, not anime, and not cartoons; they were closer to Bosch and not too distant from George Condo.

BARBARA A. MACADAM



Melvin Edwards, *Homage to the Poet Léon Gontran Damas*, 1978–81, steel in five parts, dimensions variable.

MELVIN EDWARDS

ALEXANDER GRAY ASSOCIATES
OCTOBER 30 - DECEMBER 13

This expansive, tightly curated show, which focused on Melvin Edwards's engagement with Africa over the past half century or so, underscored the simple fact that the New York-, Dakar-, and Senegal-based artist, 78 next month, should be ranked as one of the key sculptors of the postwar era, a master using age-old means to achieve trenchant ends. He has spent his career creating assemblages wrought by welding together metal objects—hammers, locks, knives, screws—associated with violence and control, but also with creation, to make what he calls “Lynch Fragments,” many of which lined the walls here. These sculptures are dense with material (much of it sourced from Senegal)—as tangled up as any societal dispute, as tightly woven as any ideology—and they require you to get up close to see how they’re built and thereby to confront their ferocious faces head on.

The pièce de résistance in the exhibition was *Homage to the Poet Léon Gontran Damas* (1978–81), a gallery-filling work made with slices of weathered steel. Two planes sat in corners, a crescent shape defended the front, and two circles in the center suggested seats with a chain spiraling around them. Intended by Edwards as a place of meditation and dedicated to the cofounder of Négritude, it looked like a garden, a redoubt for reflection, and a fortress.

ANDREW RUSSETH



Inger Johanne Grytting, *M_7, 2014*, 2014,
oil on canvas, 30" x 30".

PATRICK CARRARA & INGER JOHANNE GRYTTING

MURIEL GUÉPIN
OCTOBER 10 - NOVEMBER 16

Works by the French artist Patrick Carrara and the Norwegian Inger Johanne Grytting represented two sides of the same coin. While both artists established their love of repetitive lines, Carrara used a stark black-and-white palette and a rigid structure, emphasizing masculinity, whereas Grytting employed loose, lighter-toned brushstrokes on top of a more vibrantly colored base, rendering her work softer and more nuanced.

Carrara’s artistic progression was demonstrated here, with his earliest pieces consisting of straight graphite lines on paper, showing the depressions made by his pencil. Later, Carrara developed a layering technique by painting bold black ink on Mylar, building up rather than digging in. His most recent works jump into three dimensions—black threads binding square sheets of Plexiglas together.

Grytting approaches line in a different manner; she layers parallel lines in columns over a gridded oil underpainting, allowing imperfections to appear. The paintings, according to the artist, serve as a visual diary as her emotions influence the tension in her hand, which then produces different qualities of strokes. These subtle variations in Grytting’s lines are a defining trait of her work.

By placing these artists in conversation, this show revealed how a limited vocabulary can produce such a diversity of expression.

STEFANIE WALDEK



Inka Essenhigh, *Star Maker*, 2014, oil on paper,
51 1/4" x 40".

INKA ESSENHIGH

JACOB LEWIS
OCTOBER 17 - NOVEMBER 15

86 In this show, poetically titled "Comet Dust & Crystal Shards," Inka Essenhigh's paintings invoked a childlike enchantment—capable even of melting the hearts of those not previously drawn to her work. Here was the planet as seen through an idealized lens, where humans live in such harmony with nature that it's hard to tell the natural world from the imagined one. Essenhigh's female spirits were set in panoramas of vine-covered earth and starry skies at the dawn, or happy twilight, of time.

What kept viewers teetering in the present was the just-painted freshness of Essenhigh's gestures on paper: an active, breathing surface that allows the artist no second chance. Presented in diptych and triptych format, the division of images by space and framing grounded the figures in geometry while lending substance and window-like distance to supernatural events.

City Blossom (2014) is dominated by an undulating hydra-like shape that morphs into leopards, flowers, and sprites, its sinuous tentacles taking over an urban canyon lined with blank high-rises, while a couple of human onlookers linger in the background and undefined organic shapes (leaves? birds? nuclei?) swirl in the air. Despite hovering on the brink of being cloying or cartoonlike, these new works maintained their artistic edge while offering just the right dose of magic.

CAROL DIEHL



Julio Valdez, *Celestün*, 2014, oil on linen, 70" x 38".

JULIO VALDEZ

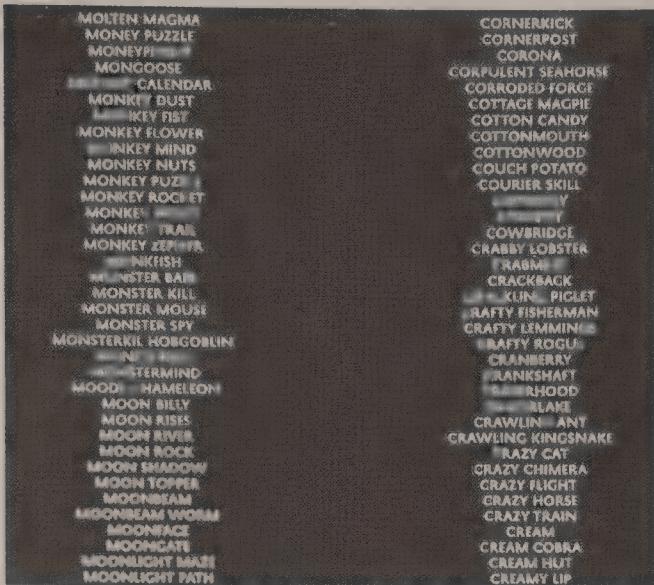
JUNE KELLY
NOVEMBER 7 - DECEMBER 9

Born in the Dominican Republic, Julio Valdez grew up surrounded by water. The exhibition "Para Soñar el Sol" (In Order to Dream the Sun) examined eight of his recent oil paintings, all sharing the blue-green hues of the sea. In each, the artist swirls his pigments in dizzying patterns that create a hallucinatory impression of water's ever-changing form.

Though water pervaded each painting in the show, all of the works examined different aspects of the aquatic realm. *Celestün* (2014) focuses on the frenzied surface, with ridges of water catching glimpses of green leaves and blue sky from a landscape just out of the frame. Undulating ripples distort colorful fish that swim through the shallow sea in *Peces Curiosos II* (2014). Humans, too, make a splash—in *Dreaming Boy III* (2012), a reclining youth floats in dreamlike eddies, and in *Oficiante del Mar II* (2010–12) a man's shadow encounters the lurking silhouette of an octopus.

While the water in each work energetically danced in dazzling light, there was a subtle sense of isolation and uncertainty throughout—the sensation one has when experiencing the vastness of the ocean and the mystery of what lies in the deep. To the people of the Caribbean islands, water is a source of life, but it can also confine them to their shores.

STEFANIE WALDEK



Trevor Paglen, *Code Names of the Surveillance State* (detail), 2014, dimensions variable.

TREVOR PAGLEN

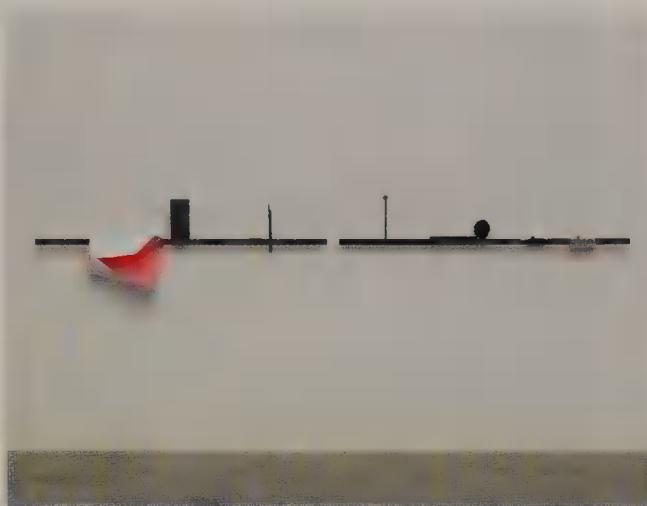
METRO PICTURES
OCTOBER 25 - DECEMBER 20

Trevor Paglen, who has advanced degrees in art and theoretical geography, usually works with telephotographic images. He is known for his observations concerning the clandestine global military-industrial complex and has presented evidence of a vast network of satellites and drones, black-op bases, and secret prisons in Afghanistan. He has ferreted out the emblematic patches worn by special forces and has contributed cinematography to Laura Poitras's film *Citizenfour*. Paglen's process of documenting what lies beyond the visible—"pushing perception as far as I can"—can be called extreme performance art.

However, in *Code Names of the Surveillance State* (2014), his recent video installation, Paglen worked solely with words. On the gallery walls, 16 columns of alphabetized and deceptively senseless code names—ranging from Puffin Muffin and Turtle Sashimi to Fox Acid and Mystic—for more than 4,000 NSA and Government Communications Headquarters surveillance programs scrolled upward into incomprehensibility. The vast scope itself was the point.

Paglen's scrolling white words, like his enigmatic telephotos of an undercover world, are highly philosophical as well as political. Yet they're also perceptual and often beautiful. His art, suspicious of both abstraction and representation, expands the meaning of institutional critique far beyond the art institution.

KIM LEVIN



Rebecca Warren, *You Are Quiet, I Will Be Too*, 2014, steel, pompon, and paper, 14 3/4" x 79 1/2" x 3 3/8" (left element) and 13 3/8" x 79 1/2" x 5 1/2" (right element).

REBECCA WARREN

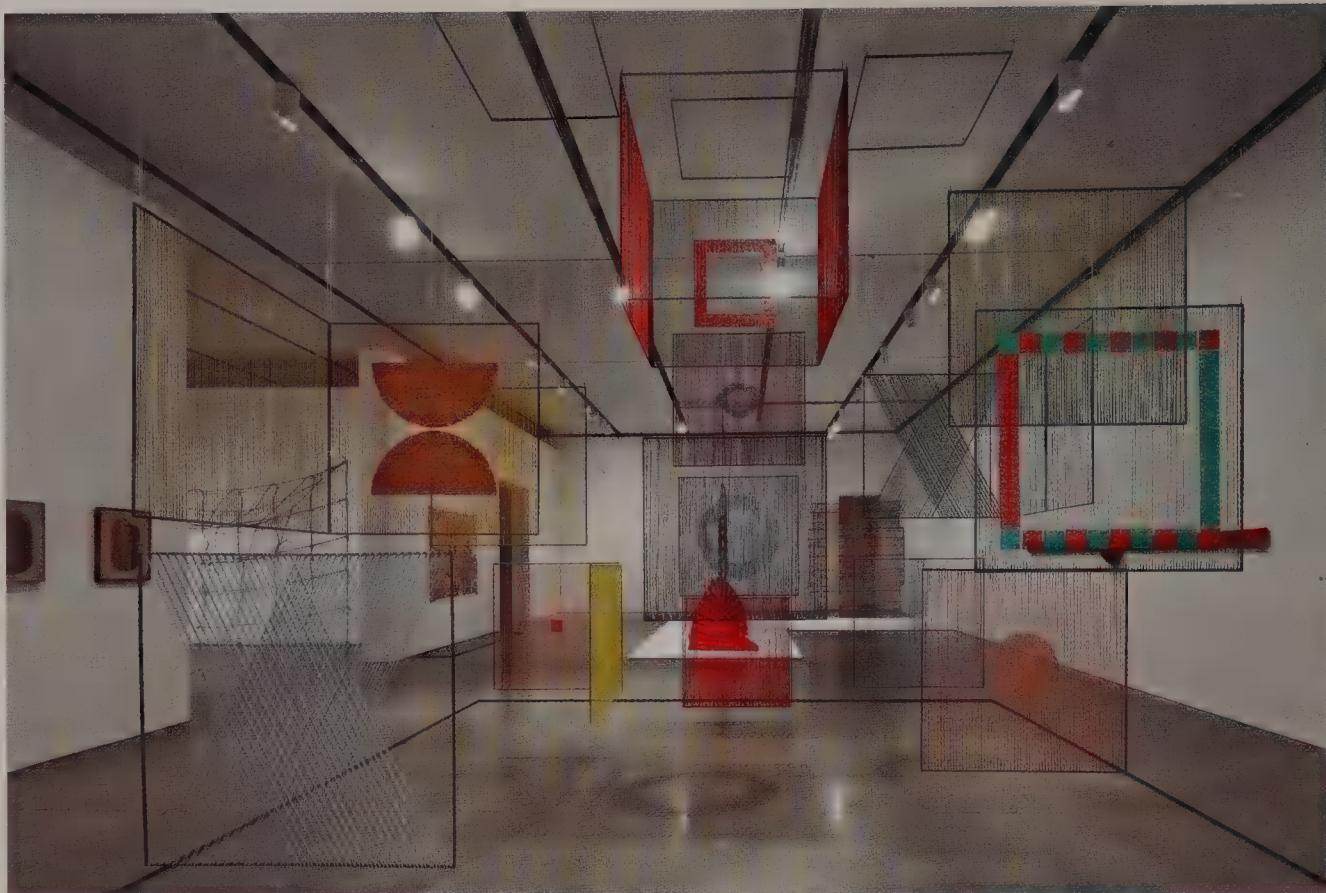
MATTHEW MARKS
SEPTEMBER 13 - OCTOBER 25

Alberto Giacometti's attenuated figures must have presented a challenge to Rebecca Warren's penchant for exaggeration. She has addressed more florid greats—Rodin, Degas, Boccioni, de Kooning—and Giacometti's stripped-down vocabulary would offer her less to ridicule. But the allusion to Karen Carpenter in the exhibition's title, "Why Do Birds Suddenly Appear?", revealed that eating disorders, not existential isolation, informed Warren's take on the great Italian's work—and that she continues to hammer away at the boundaries of taste.

Clouseau and *When Gauguin* (all works bronze, 2014) have one, randomly hypertrophic breast, at groin height. Warren paints the lumpy surfaces of these undulating pillars with oils. Particularly skinny, *Jeu Jeun* ("fasting game") rests on an expansive base slathered in chalky hues, exaggerating its pathos by emphasizing the space enclosing it. With no base at all, *Basquiat* looks precarious.

Two slender, slight wall works in a constructivist vein and a pair of chunky bronze blobs on dollies provided formal counterpoints, but center stage belonged to the totemic figures. Identical except for nuances of their paint jobs, two works were titled *Long Ago and So Far Away*. The cranial contours of the sculptures' apexes were unmistakable, but does twinning the depiction of aloneness halve the effect, or double it?

STEPHEN MAINE



Elsi Giauque, *Élément spatial (Spatial Element)*, 1979, linen, silk, wool, and metal, 20 elements.

35 $\frac{5}{8}$ " x 37 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " each. installation view.

88

"FIBER: SCULPTURE 1960–PRESENT"

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART
BOSTON

OCTOBER 1 - JANUARY 4

That repetition plays such a central role in art production from the 1960s forward recommends for serious art-historical consideration the largely overlooked contributions of fiber art, a heterogeneous field of textile-related techniques. Examining some 50 works by 34 artists, this well-conceived exhibition detailed fiber art's postwar emergence and recent reclamation, and situated it in critical tension with canonized sculptural traditions, particularly Post-Minimalism.

Opening with two towering "woven forms" (1961 and 1966) by Lenore Tawney, among the first to break from the planar basis of textiles, the show unfolded across several thematic groupings. With Elsi Giauque's volumetric lattice, it demonstrated how color in fiber art inheres in the weave, rather than being applied retroactively, as in painting. Exploring the grid, structural both to most textiles and to strains of 20th-century abstraction, was Robert Rohm's 1969 wall-mounted matrix of knotted rope. Severed at various points, it exploits loft, weight,

and pliancy to both capitalize on the grid and defy it. Fiber art's feminist implications came to the fore in Faith Wilding's landmark *Crocheted Environment* from 1972 and Josh Faught's sequined garden trellis from 2009, each of which breaks down the gendered dyads of art and craft, public and private, and inside and outside. Sheila Pepe's monumental, blue-green, rafter-hung work further crystallized the medium's political overtones, asking: who is licensed to take up space?

The exhibition provided indispensable historical insight into the recent resurgence of fiber in contemporary art. Why, the question remains, have such practices again become timely? One reason may lie in renewed concerns about labor, value, and production in late-capitalist society. Among several works pointing in this direction was Haegue Yang's 2013 sound piece, in which a podcast-loaded iPod tracks the artist's time invested in the making of an intricate pair of suspended macramé spires.

CLAIRE GRACE



Jean-Michel Basquiat, *King Zulu*, 1986, acrylic, wax, and felt-tip pen on canvas, 79 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 100 $\frac{3}{8}$ ".

PROSPECT NEW ORLEANS

VARIOUS VENUES
NEW ORLEANS
OCTOBER 25 - JANUARY 25

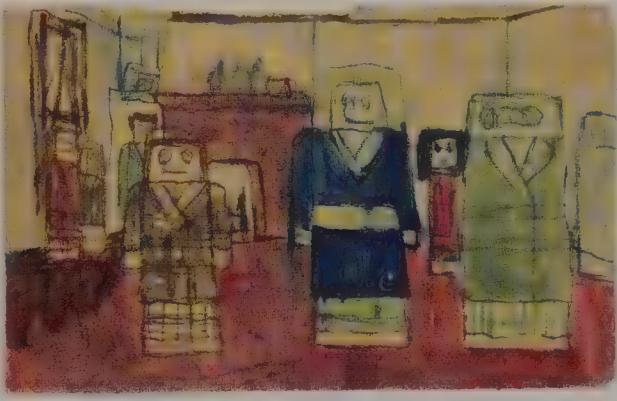
“Prospect.3: Notes for Now” presented the work of 58 contemporary artists at 18 sites in and around New Orleans, from the New Orleans Museum of Art and the Contemporary Arts Center to college campuses, riverfront wharves, and art spaces in the city’s historic neighborhoods. This third iteration of the Prospect New Orleans biennial also included Prospect.3+, which featured the work of 250 local artists at 65 venues.

Curated by Los Angeles County Museum of Art’s Franklin Sirmans, P.3 brought together works that addressed contemporary power structures and social constructs as well as more existential problems of place, history, and identity. For instance, Bahamian artist Tavares Strachan’s 50-by-10-foot neon sign reading “You Belong Here,” set on a barge in the Mississippi River, commemorated the thousands of people displaced when Hurricane Katrina flooded the city’s Lower Ninth Ward. At the Ogden Museum of Southern Art’s Jean-Michel Basquiat exhibition, the painting *King Zulu*

(1986), among others by the artist, referred to the African diasporic culture of New Orleans, the Mississippi Delta, and the Caribbean. And at the Contemporary Arts Center, Javanese artist Agus Suwage’s self-portrait constructed of tin cans and parts of a blaring car audio system represented the artist’s fears of growing intolerance of minorities in Indonesia.

At the Newcomb Gallery of Art, Andrea Fraser’s *Monument to Discarded Fantasies* (2003)—a pile of brightly colored Carnival costumes found abandoned in the streets of Rio de Janeiro—memorialized the moment between celebration and a return to the realities of the everyday world. Reflecting the biennial’s underlying theme of global connectedness was the Propeller Group and Christopher Myers’s surreal video *The Living Need Light, and the Dead Need Music* (2014), shown at the UNO St. Claude Art Gallery. Filmed in Vietnam, it brilliantly illustrated our universal need to honor the mysteries of life, death, and immortality.

JOHN R. KEMP



James Castle, *Untitled*, n.d., found paper, soot, and color of unknown origin, 4 3/4" x 7 3/8".

JAMES CASTLE

SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM
WASHINGTON, D.C.
SEPTEMBER 26 - FEBRUARY 1

James Castle (1899–1977), who was born deaf in Garden Valley, Idaho, made captivating, often enigmatic drawings of farms, houses, and people. An autodidact, he eschewed professional art supplies and drew with a mix of stove soot and saliva on any printed ephemera he could get his hands on, including food labels, flyers, and box tops.

Castle sold enough drawings in his lifetime that his relatives were eventually able to buy him a trailer, which he used as a studio on the family farm in Boise. His parents and sister and her family appear in some of his strangest drawings as stiff, blocklike figures standing in living rooms and yards. Other works show a breathtaking talent for economy and perspective, such as a drawing of an empty room with a door opening onto a landscape of distant hills, or a still life of dolls arranged on a piano, evoking the quiet intensity of Giorgio Morandi.

Maddeningly for curators, none of Castle's soot drawings, collages, or small color compositions have titles or dates, although nearly all that survive are believed to have been made after 1931. Castle also made clever paper-and-thread sculptures of birds and other objects, a selection of which appeared in the 2013 Venice Biennale. Although this survey regrettably included only a few of those, it nonetheless gave a rich sense of Castle's extraordinary gifts.

ROGER ATWOOD



John Miller, *Untitled*, 1987, acrylic on canvas, 39 1/2" x 26".

JOHN MILLER

MELIKSETIAN BRIGGS
LOS ANGELES
OCTOBER 25 - DECEMBER 20

This show of five vintage paintings by John Miller was modest in size but ambitious in conceptual scope. The works were made in the 1980s while their subject matter harked back to the 1960s, as did the title of the show, "Do It Again!"—a twist on *Do It!: Scenarios of the Revolution*, Jerry Rubin's 1970 Yippie manifesto.

Two representational canvases and three abstractions recalled a time when the New York-based artist was grappling with the notion of signature styles and correspondences between seemingly disparate modes of painting. Miller credits Sherrie Levine's re-creations of famous artworks as his inspiration, but he developed his own approach to appropriation, employing it in examinations of American social, cultural, and political structures.

One painting, apparently based on a news photograph, depicts a Black Power rally, with peaceful protesters corralled by police. Another portrays two members of the Carrie Nations, a fictional rock band from the 1970 film *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*. The murky, reddish-brown abstractions are amalgamations of Abstract Expressionist gestures. But all the works are part of the same conceptual stew, offering viewers a window onto Miller's interests and methods at an early stage in his career, when his particular brand of institutional critique was taking concrete form.

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Karina Jønson, *Untitled* 2012, digital print. Courtesy of the artist.

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Philippe Parreno, "Quasi-Objects," 2014, installation view. Esther Schipper.

PHILIPPE PARRENO

SCHINKEL PAVILLON AND ESTHER SCHIPPER, BERLIN
 NOVEMBER 15 - DECEMBER 21 (SCHINKEL)
 NOVEMBER 14 - JANUARY 15 (SCHIPPER)

French artist Philippe Parreno first exhibited *How Can We Tell the Dancers from the Dance?* in 2012 at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Two years later, the installation found an afterlife in the Schinkel Pavilion's austere octagonal hall. Entering the pavilion, visitors encountered nothing but a circular raised platform and a self-propelled segment of curved wall that continuously rotated around it. Filling the space were the sounds of bodies jumping, walking, and running, recorded during the last performance of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in New York in December 2011, and resurrected as aural memory in Parreno's minimalist installation. With its interrogative title questioning the embodied nature of choreography, Parreno's work prompts us to imagine, as we stand before it, the movements of dancers from a company that is no more.

Similarly manipulating the viewer's perceptual and

psychological experience was the artist's exhibition at Esther Schipper. Here, Parreno had assembled a panoply of items throughout the gallery: helium-inflated foil balloons in the shapes of fish and sharks, a player piano, electrical plugs and adapters arranged into sculptures, LED lights, fluorescent lights, an Arne Jacobsen floor lamp, and a large pile of artificial snow. Borrowing from the French philosopher Michel Serres, Parreno calls these items "quasi-objects," a term Serres uses to describe the dependency of such things on their environments. Many of them, for instance, drew attention to the walls on which they literally depended, whether the pile of snow in one corner or the morass of mounted neon lights and transformers wrapped around another. Throughout, one heard the constant buzz of electricity—an unnerving tone that seemed to transform the sanitized space into a pulsating dystopia.

JORDAN TROELLER

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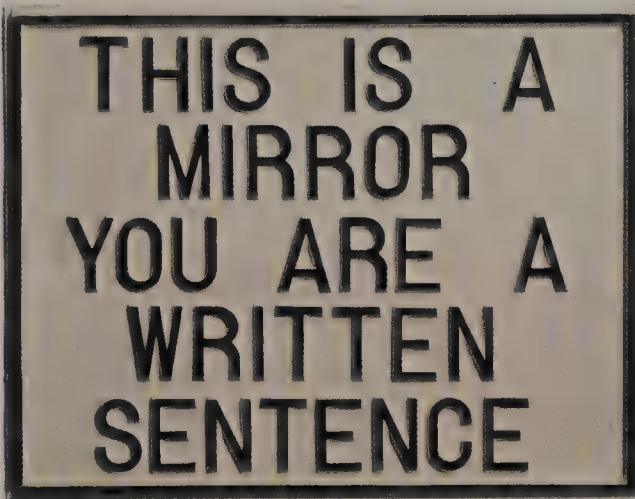
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Luis Camnitzer, *This Is a Mirror. You Are a Written Sentence.*, 1966–68. vacuum-formed polystyrene, 19" x 24 $\frac{5}{8}$ " x $\frac{5}{8}$ ".

"ILLUSIONS"

CASA DAROS, RIO DE JANEIRO
SEPTEMBER 13 - FEBRUARY 13

66 This is a mirror. You are a written sentence," reads a 1966–68 vacuum-formed sign by Luis Camnitzer. The work makes an apt introduction to "Illusions," a show of installations, videos, drawings, and objects from the Daros Latinamerica collection of contemporary Latin American art.

In another piece by Camnitzer, from 1979, a collection of oddments is pinned to the wall, each paired with a handwritten word on a fragment of paper. A scrap of candy wrapper is labeled "the motive"; a bit of plastic, "the punishment"; a battered pen top, "the premonition."

They are random objects and arbitrary words, yet we scan them for meaning. That urge to make sense of things is thrillingly challenged in this exhibition, as the works on view become increasingly confusing, unsettling, and finally shocking.

Disorientation prevails in Leandro Erlich's *Changing Rooms* (2008), a labyrinth of 24 in-store changing cubicles, as one steps through "mirror" after "mirror," or turns to see a stranger where—your brain is convinced of it—your reflection should be. Uncertainty gives way to dread at the close of the show with Fernando Pareja and Leidy Chavez's 2012 praxinoscopic animation machine, which shows tiny figures endlessly hurrying across a courtyard before jumping into an abyss at its center with the heart-rending cry: "Ah, ahh, ohh, eieohhhhhh!"

CLARE RIGBY



Imran Qureshi, *Opening word of this new scripture*, 2013, gouache and gold leaf on washi paper, 10 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ ".

IMRAN QURESHI

IKON GALLERY, BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND
NOVEMBER 19 - JANUARY 25

London-based artist Imran Qureshi is known as a master of traditional miniature painting wryly readapted to modern motifs. His works have included, for example, a figure deftly painted in ancient Mughal style wearing cargo shorts and carrying a shopping bag. This wide-ranging exhibition highlighted Qureshi's finesse with a broader range of mediums, including video and installation.

The show opened with miniatures executed since 1999, including the riveting *Self-Portrait* (2009), a cameo-like oval of Qureshi sniffing a flower as dragonflies flit about. In *Opening word of this new scripture* (2013), the artist appears on a rooftop, inpainting pools of bloodred pigment with precisely rendered flower petals. This recurring motif—spilt blood, embellished with a delicate petal pattern—appears often in Qureshi's recent work. With it, he seems to be asking us not to avert our eyes from violence but to contemplate its toll on the innocent.

Elsewhere, in works from 2013 and 2014, paint spilled off the canvas and onto the walls and floors. The exhibition culminated with *And they still seek the traces of blood* (2013–14), a gigantic installation made of about 30,000 pieces of paper (actually reproductions of the artist's own work), daubed with red, crumpled up, and thrown into a room. Towering over the viewer like a mountain of bloody rags, it had a disturbing, visceral power.

ROGER ATWOOD



James Richards, *Raking Light*, 2014, still from digital video with sound, 7 minutes, 5 seconds.

JAMES RICHARDS

CABINET, LONDON
OCTOBER 11 - DECEMBER 6

A foreboding atmosphere permeates James Richards's powerful seven-minute video, *Raking Light* (2014), the sole work in this show. Alternating positive and negative images of fire, water, and smoke are set to a portentous soundtrack, evoking a mood that verges on the apocalyptic, while the film's more mundane passages—flocks of starlings, water fizzing in a glass, reflections in a puddle—have a quiet poetry.

Crisply edited, the video combines found footage and passages filmed by the artist into a harmonious, abstract whole. We see a tree standing alone in a flooded field, windswept waves, and, most strikingly, flares or fireworks exploding in a forest. The sparks scintillate like diamonds before the scene is obscured by thick smoke.

The video is shown on a continuous loop, so the viewer perceives no beginning or end. Yet it seems to build toward the only vaguely narrative element—a sequence showing tourists aboard a Maid of the Mist boat at Niagara Falls. Seen through the spray, their hooded raincoats gleam a sickly, chemical orange.

From here the film cuts to shots of churning water and of seagulls flying upside down. Could Richards be suggesting a mass drowning? There is no single reading to this production, but it gives you plenty to ponder and admire.

ROGER ATWOOD



Brent Wadden, *No. 1 (Dominion)*, 2014, handwoven fibers, wool, cotton, and acrylic on canvas, 106" x 82½".

BRENT WADDEN

PERES PROJECTS, BERLIN
NOVEMBER 22 - JANUARY 10

The abstract, handwoven tapestries in Brent Wadden's recent solo show "Pit Pony" are large in scale—all of them are a little under 8 by 9 feet—and have big implications. At the same time, they have a homey presence that is part of their power. Expanses of largely brown, black, cream, and blue wavelike forms, they recall imposing abstract canvases in the modernist tradition (until a few years ago, the Canadian-born artist was a painter), but their soft surfaces and wonky geometries make them warm and welcoming.

Wadden sources the yarns for his weavings from cyber- and real-world last-stop shops, such as eBay, Craigslist, and thrift stores. Interwoven with these secondhand materials are scraps of fabric donated by his family and friends. He encourages the warp and weft to settle where they will, which contributes to the works' felicitous balance of accident and purpose.

The tapestries advance feminism's long battle to gain for lowly domestic objects—traditionally made by women—the same standing as "fine" art made by the usually white and male lone genius. Along with arguing for a more expansive definition of art, these lovely works also prove that artists can recycle consumer products instead of exemplifying, as they too often do, conspicuous consumption.

ANA FINEL HONIGMAN

100 YEARS AGO

"Paris Letter," by B. C.

February 20, 1915

There is a general consensus of opinion among the older and more conservative French artists, a feeling also shared in England, that the effect of the war on foreign art will be to at least check and modify, if not destroy, some of the recent modern movements, such as "Futurism," "Cubism," "Pointillism," etc. The reason for this belief is not difficult to discern. So many of the leaders in these movements were young men and women who followed the line of least resistance that, with the killing of some of the men, and the consequent distraction from art to other channels of occupation by the women, there will be a diminution of objective interest in new "Fads," and a consequent return to saner methods.



75 YEARS AGO

"Pan-American Debut: Complete U. S. Show of Argentine Art Today," by Enrique Prins

February 3, 1940

Buenos Aires, advancing beyond what would be, possibly, her natural and logical position, is establishing spiritual bonds with the great centers of art. . . . A growing art is arising among contributors of modern tendencies. It is a type of art which tends to impose its style, its concepts, its theories and its techniques here among us, as it has already done in older centers. . . . Naturally and inevitably the advances and recognized successes in more renowned centers have had their echoes in our own. Public opinion, the critics, imported reviews . . . all have contributed to stimulate the modernistic trend.



50 YEARS AGO

"J'accuse Marcel Duchamp," by Thomas B. Hess

February 1965

Duchamp's "ready-mades" are a product of his "flair" (to quote R. Hamilton) for the object. He has that interior-decorator's eye which spots beautiful items in the dingiest flea-market.

When Duchamp sent a commonplace or despicable object to an art exhibition (the hat rack or the urinal), it was an anti-art gesture at modern sculpture, but the additional twist for his fan-club was that the object really is beautiful in itself. And probably better executed technically than much contemporary modernizing art. In this sly irony, Camp Art was born. . . . It is trivial because of its reliance on a built-in audience; it exists in the smirk of the beholder.



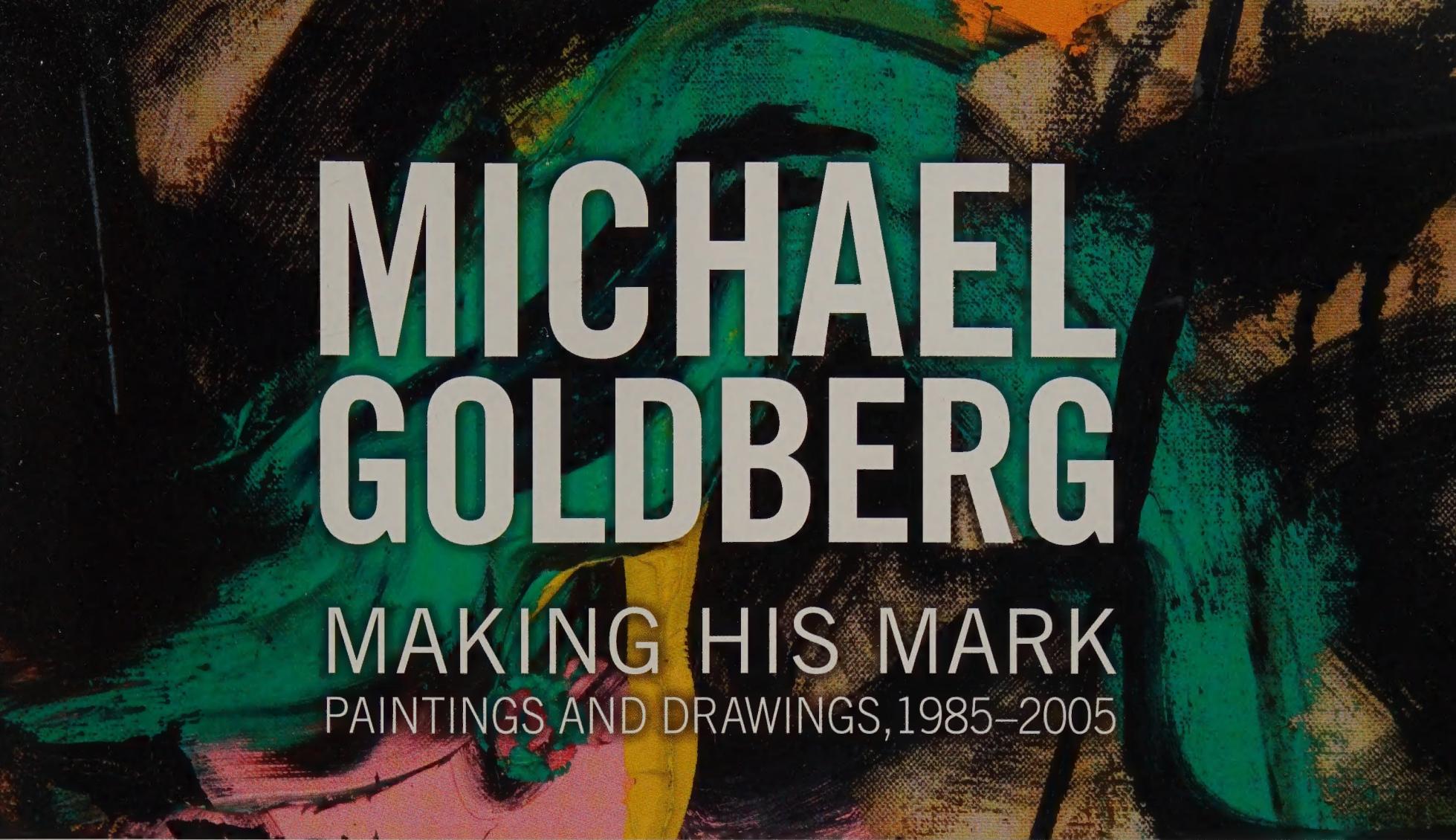
25 YEARS AGO

"Pop and Circumstance," by Richard B. Woodward

February 1990

For the Miami fountain . . . they began with [Coosje] van Bruggen's suggestion of the juicer—[Claes] Oldenburg had once designed a soft Silex juicer as a proposal for a monument in Manhattan's Columbus Circle. The juicer became a plate, then a set of plates with a dishwasher. The orange was reduced to a few peels until they decided upon a bowl, which in turn became a mess of fragments, the object frozen at the moment of impact. . . . "Every part of the bowl is unique, yet they belong to one configuration, which doesn't necessarily come together." They wanted to strike an ominous note of violence—Miami has experienced much racial upheaval in recent years.





MICHAEL GOLDBERG

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Jasper Johns *In the Studio*, 1982, encaustic and collage on canvas with objects, 72 x 48 x 5 inches (182.9 x 121.9 x 12.7 cm). Collection of the artist © 2014 Jasper Johns/Licensed by VAGA, New York

In the Studio

Gagosian Gallery
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522 West 21st Street, New York
T. 212.741.1717

980 Madison Avenue, New York
T. 212.744.2313